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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you think it is time that Saipan enacted an anti-animal cruelty statute?

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INSIDE

Giant Rat

Imagine a rodent that weighed a ton and was as big as a bull.

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Mighty Friend

Nobody crosses a room like Angelina Jolie.

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Funds OK'd to keep Saipan employees. PAGE 3

DCCA takes over NMI childcare program. PAGE 5

Rally against federalization this Sunday

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Local citizens will hold a peaceful rally on Sunday to show their opposition to legislation federalizing CNMI immigration.

Cruz

Organizers say the rally will serve as a response to the "political activism of the CNMI's nonresident worker population clamoring for federalization to secure

See RALLY on Page 4

300-plus checks, plane tickets pile up at Labor

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

More than 300 checks and repatriation tickets owed to nonresident workers remain uncollected and are gathering dust at the Department of Labor.

According to Labor Administrative Division director Rose Ada-Hocog, the uncollected checks and repatriation tickets date to as far back as 1993 up to the last year.

"They are payments that employers were ordered to pay their employees as settlement for unpaid wage claims and for whatever other types of damages that

See 300-PLUS on Page 4

VEIL OF WATER JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A tourist beats the heat of the sun by cooling off on the Siheky Splash Pool of the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio yesterday. According to MVA, the CNMI is projected to welcome 468,286 tourists in 2008.

Garment company Sam Kwang Corp. closing tomorrow

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Garment manufacturer Sam Kwang Saipan Corp. is shutting down its factory in Afetnas tomorrow, Saturday, but most of its 157 alien workers are opting to stay and find new employers.

Labor investigator Carlos Camacho disclosed that of the 157 guest workers

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AP

Pedia Care Infant Drops Long-Acting Cough and Concentrated Tylenol Infants' Drops Plus Cold & Cough are shown in this Oct. 11, 2007 file photo.

'Cold medicines too risky for tots'

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP MEDICAL WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Parents may be left with only love and lots of liquid to give their sniffling babies and toddlers now that the government is declaring over-the-counter cough and cold medicines too risky for tots.

See COLD on Page 4

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Local

Emergency Operations Center project could start next month

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The groundbreaking for the construction of the CNMI Emergency Operations Center is expected to commence this February or March as the bid opening was recently conducted in Hawaii.

Emergency Management Office acting director Mark S. Pangelinan said the construction of the EOC is anticipated to be completed in a year after a notice to proceed is issued to the contractor.

In a letter to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial on Wednesday, Pangelinan said the bid opening for the EOC was held Friday (Hawaii time) at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' District Office in Honolulu.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded a $4-million grant to EMO to build the operations center.

In 2004, EMO requested the then Marianas Public Lands Authority to designate 8,300 square meters of public land for the EOC project.

EMO said it needs such land to accommodate a 10,000-square-foot single floor building, storage, utilities, water tanks, and a parking lot for up to 40 vehicles, with perimeter fencing around the entire compound for enhanced security against any possible terrorist attack.

A total of three bids were submitted by contractors. GPPC Inc. submitted the lowest bid in the amount of $2.8 million for the base bid, according to Pangelinan.

GPPC submitted a bid in the amount of $916,000 for the five

See EMERGENCY on Page 4

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Funds OK'd to keep Saipan employees

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Acting Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez approved yesterday a bill providing funds for Saipan employees affected by the planned government layoff.

House Local Bill 15-19, now Saipan Local Law 15-31, appropriates $1.2 million of local pokers fees for the salaries of the Saipan workers who were issued furlough notices effective Dec. 22, 2007 due to the government's lack of funds.

The employees were given a 30-day extension following a promise by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation to produce the money to keep them on the payroll.

But the $1.2 million appropriation may not be enough to keep all 157 of the Saipan workers. Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said previously that $2.5 million was needed to fund the salaries of the employees until the end of the fiscal year, which is on Sept. 30, 2007.

"[This appropriation] is a big help. But it may not be enough for everybody on Saipan. We will do what we can, see if we can get more money," said press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr.

He reported that the Office of Personnel Management should execute new contracts with those employees who will be kept in service before Jan. 22.

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, who authored the bill in the 15th Legislature, said he hopes the administration would find a way to keep all of the Saipan workers employed for at least part of the fiscal year. He also expressed hope that additional revenues become available before the $1.2 million runs out again.

"Unfortunately, we found that funding is not sufficient to cover all of them," Deleon Guerrero said. "But this appropriation will provide immediate relief. It will help keep people employed, if not for the whole year, then at least part of it."

Grey worries for the future of his personnel

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Immigration Director Melvin Grey raised concern yesterday about the jobs of his personnel when the federal government takes over local immigration.

Grey said that the federalization bill's provision on existing immigration employees is vague.

"My concern is in the wording of the bill—it's pretty vague. Giving preference doesn't mean much of anything. We'd like to see some commitment," he added.

The CNMI immigration bill, as passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, includes this provision on the hiring of immigration officers under a federalized system: "To the maximum extent practicable and consistent with the satisfactory performance of assigned duties… the Attorney General, Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of Labor shall recruit and hire personnel from among qualified U.S. citizens and national applicants residing in the Commonwealth to serve as staff in carrying out the operations described in [this bill]".

"Our immigration officers are very competent in their jobs. People don't realize how good they are. They are good decision makers, very conscientious. I want to see that they are protected when federalization happens," Grey said.

He also expressed little confidence in the federal bureaucracy, which he said had frustrated his division's recent efforts to get training for local immigration officers.

He said that the Department of Homeland Security offices in Guam, Hawaii, and San Francisco gave him the runaround before Washington, D.C. finally turned him down and referred him to the Interior Department.

He added that he tried to contact the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, but got no response.

See GREY on Page 4

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Club V welcomes newest band, Zynergy

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The new band Zynergy will give Saipan a taste of its sound when they grace the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V tonight for an inaugural performance with the outgoing Switchgroove.

Dennis Adona, the group's bassist and bandleader, said he looks forward to playing in front of a different crowd.

Adona jumpstarted the group with his friends, drummer Marvin Bachoy and keyboardist Donnie Gutierrez nine years ago.

The three pioneers of Zynergy collaborated with other members throughout the years before they finally discovered guitarist Mark Pio, female vocalist Christine Olairte and male vocalist JC Mangilit. The three had auditioned for Zynergy and since then have become essential to the group.

Mangilit said, "I let them know what kinds of songs we should look into and how we should go about putting them together."

He explained that one of the toughest situation the group experiences is when they have to practice a spankin' new song just in time for a show the very next day.

"When we were performing in Indonesia, many times the audience would request a song that had just come out in the radio the day before. We always have to be up-to-date with music," emphasized Mangilit.

When asked if the group is willing to sing and perform Chamorro or Carolinian music, Mangilit said, "Sure. We're always willing to learn. We have other songs in different languages."

Mangilit remembered the group performing in front of a live audience in Malaysia. "We were holding our microphones, playing our instruments smiling and just really getting into it."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Club V's newest band is called Zynergy. They will perform tonight back-to-back with the outgoing Switchgroove.

"But when we were through, one stage man approached us and said, 'Why were you all smiling? It's a sad song. It's about a girl whose man had just left her!' I was like, 'Oh my God!' *Kasi*, when we first heard it, it sounded like a happy song," Mangilit said, laughing.

The group's newest vocalist, 18-year-old Katrin Sundiam, said her most memorable experience was when they performed for local network ABS-CBN. "It was really exciting for me because it's my favorite channel," said Sundiam.

According to the group, Sundiam's bubbly personality brings spunk to the band.

"She is always laughing, cracking jokes. Just like a kid," said Mangilit.

Adona's metaphor for the group is that of ice cream with many different flavors.

"Just like ice cream with many different flavors, everyone in the group has their own style, own talent."

Zynergy will be performing at the Club V three nights a week for three months.

"We look forward to entertaining the people here. It's what we do. It's what we love to do," said Mangilit.

COLD

From Page 1

The Food and Drug Administration was issuing that warning Thursday to parents of children under 2.

It's a move expected for months: Drug companies last October quit selling dozens of versions of nonprescription cold remedies targeted specifically to babies and toddlers. That month, the FDA's scientific advisers also voted that the drugs don't work in small children and shouldn't be used in preschoolers, either—anyone under age 6.

The FDA still hasn't decided if OTC decongestants, antihistamines and cough suppressants are appropriate for older children, officials told The Associated Press. Expect a decision on that by spring, the deadline necessary to notify manufacturers before they begin production for next fall's cold season.

For now, FDA's first official ruling focuses on youngsters under 2, warning that "serious and potentially life-threatening side effects can occur."

FDA is worried that parents haven't gotten that message despite all the publicity last fall. They may still have infant-targeted drugs at home, or they may buy drugs meant for older children to give to tots instead, said Dr. Charles Ganley, FDA's nonprescription drugs chief.

"We still have a concern," Ganley said. "It falls out of people's consciousness. We're still in the middle of cold season right now."

Ganley was particularly struck by recent surveys that suggest many parents don't believe OTC remedies could pose a problem, especially if they've given them to an older child without harm.

GREY

From Page 3

"This is an example of the federal bureaucracy that we are going to have to deal with when federalization happens. We're talking about Homeland Security cooperation. They are 100 miles away and they cannot come out here to give us some training that I can get from the Australian government in a week," Grey said.

The Division of Immigration employs 65 officers.

EMERGENCY

From Page 2

government option items (EMO, EMO Water Filtration System, DDC System for HVAC, Redundant Chiller Unit, and Redundant Air Handling Unit to Communications Room).

Pangelinan said they have 180 calendar days after the award of the base bid to exercise the award of any the government option items.

He said the bid is currently being evaluated by the Army Corps.

"We have sufficient funds to award the basic contract. It is expected that the construction contract will be awarded in about three weeks. More detailed assessment of remaining funds is required before we can award any of the government option items," he said.

Pangelinan said he intends to assess this, along with Army Corps representative James K. Hatashima, who will be on island on Jan. 22, 2008 at 9am to meet and go over the assessment items for the project here at EMO's Office.

"We have worked hard to make this EOC project a reality in the CNMI," he said.

The $4-million grant was part of an $81-million funding made available through FEMA for the EOC grant program. In 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

GARMENT

From Page 1

at Sam Kwang, only 45 have decided so far to go back to China after the closure. The 112 remaining guest workers want to look for jobs here.

Fourteen resident workers will also be affected by Sam Kwang's shutdown, according to Camacho.

Labor has given these 112 alien workers 45 days to seek new employers. They may transfer to non-garment jobs if qualified.

If any employee fails to submit a timely application for transfer, or asks to be repatriated, Sam Kwang must provide a repatriation ticket within 15 days, Labor said.

All work/entry permits for the workers are revoked effective this Sunday, Jan. 20.

In November 2007, Sam Kwang, through its corporate secretary Jone Suk Park, informed Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas about the factory's closure effective on Jan. 19, 2008.

Park cited that the rising costs of labor, the increased competition from China and other Asian countries, and the increased costs of doing business in the CNMI have made their operations impossible.

"On behalf of Sam Kwang, I want to thank you and the employees of the Department of Labor for the good work and assistance provided to us over the last several years," Park told San Nicolas.

Last Sunday, Jan. 13, garment manufacturer Neo Fashion Inc. also ceased operations. Similarly, most of its guest workers want to stay and look for jobs here.

Neo Fashion's closure rendered 88 alien workers and 13 resident workers jobless.

Poong In Saipan Inc. will also close at the end of the month. L&S Apparel Inc. ceased operations on Dec. 31, 2007, but many of its alien workers are still here looking for other jobs.

Many garment factories closed down on Saipan since January 2005, when the World Trade Organization lifted trade quotas.

The liberalization of trade rules has allowed Third World countries to export their garments to the U.S. As a result, many garment factories in the CNMI shutdown operations.

300-PLUS

From Page 1

were awarded to the employees," said Ada-Hocog in an interview yesterday.

According to Ada-Hocog, many of the checks may now be invalid as they are past their legitimate endorsement dates.

"They are just sitting here and there is no definite answer as to why they are still here," she said.

Ada-Hocog said what she is doing right now is inputting the checks into a database so that the department will be able to calculate the total amount of the checks they are holding and how many airline tickets had been picked up.

"Once we put all of that information together, we will sit down with our legal team and find ways on what to do next," said Ada-Hocog.

She said the checks have different amounts, with the smallest at $4.25, while "many of them are in the thousands of dollars."

She said she will also try and get in touch with the U.S. Postmaster "to inquire about the validity of some of the checks."

She said that she is aware that companies have been making payments; "It's just that employees are not coming by to pick them up or follow up."

Ada-Hocog explained that it is not the responsibility of the Labor Department to contact the employees who are owed compensation.

"They [workers] are the ones who are supposed to follow up," she said.

RALLY

From Page 1

improved immigration status."

Participants will gather at the Garapan Fishing Base, across the Kristo Rai Church on Beach Road, at 10am. A motorcade will begin at 11am, to be followed by a barbecue and potlock luncheon at the fishing base.

"The overwhelming majority of our CNMI residents are strongly against federalization, but they have not spoken out or made their views clear," said Gregorio Cruz, president of the Taotao Tano citizen group, one of the leaders of the rally.

"This event is an opportunity for all of our residents to join together against federalization without representation," he added.

Cruz said CNMI residents must put their differences aside and unite as one community to speak out against federalization, which he called "the greatest threat to the CNMI's economy and local self-government."

The three political parties in the Commonwealth will all participate in the rally, he said.

"Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and Covenant Party members [are] all united in one common cause: to express strong opposition to the U.S. government's plan to federalize the CNMI and strip it of its local autonomy during a very critical period in its economic and political development," Cruz said.

The rally has the support of the Fitial administration, which is actively lobbying against immigration federalization.

"We have always said that majority of the local people do not support federalization. And this very diverse group of people, who have not said anything so far, will finally voice their opinion just as the contract workers did. It is democracy in action," said press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr.

In related news, Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio trumpeted the benefits of a federalized immigration to business.

According to Tenorio, federalization would offer stability to investors, as they would be operating under the same rules in the Commonwealth as elsewhere in the United States. He added that the "threat" of federalization would be gone.

He also said the CNMI would benefit from secure borders and enhanced public safety.

Tenorio justified his middle-ground stance on federalization. "My intent was not to damage the CNMI, but to win as much concessions as we could. I decided that it is best for us to participate in the discussion, than be forced to adopt the national immigration policy that gives no consideration to our situation," he said in his presentation to the Society of Human Resource Management yesterday.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the bill extending immigration law and create a federally run guest-worker program in the Commonwealth.

The bill would also give the CNMI a delegate in the House with limited voting powers. Currently, all U.S. possessions except the CNMI have a delegate in Congress.

The bill is now part of an omnibus measure, which is expected to pass the U.S. Senate in early February 2008.

If the Senate passes S. 2483 without amendments, the bill may go straight to President Bush for signature. But if there are amendments, the bill will have to return to the House for concurrence.

DCCA takes over NMI childcare program

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Department of Community & Cultural Affairs is now officially the lead agency for the federally funded CNMI childcare program.

In a notice issued to all childcare providers in the CNMI, DCCA acting Secretary Melvin Faisao said the Public School System no longer administers the program "and any inquiries will be forwarded to the DCCA Childcare Program Section."

The notice puts an end to the tug-of-war between the DCCA and PSS over the handing of the childcare program.

Press secretary Charles P. Reyes, Jr. said that DCCA did "everything in its power to ensure a relatively smooth transition."

"New childcare applications would have to be made with DCCA rather than the PSS. DCCA will establish proper procedures and controls, in compliance with all federal grant requirements," he said.

Faisao said in an earlier interview that the department will still have to abide with the existing program's regulations "with regards to the designation of the lead agency."

He stressed that DCCA understands that parents value a safe and nurturing setting with appropriate regulations and oversight and monitoring using equal standards.

Faisao explained that DCCA will work with licensed providers in recognizing the value of positive, appropriate regulation and monitoring "to ensure protection and stimulate quality child care program that reduce cumulative long-range risks to children's social, academic and economic success."

A large number of daycares in the CNMI have accepted the transfer and wish to work harmoniously and hand in hand with the new lead agency.

On Oct. 16, 2007, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed Executive Order 07-10 assigning DCCA as the new lead agency for the federal childcare and development fund program. The program provides the CNMI a $1.7 million annual grant from the U.S. Child Care and Development Block Grant Program.

According to Reyes, "The Governor supports the transfer of authority and responsibility. He made the decision and he expects DCCA to successfully manage the childcare program."

The Childcare Development Program was under PSS for the past 15 years before it was turned over DCCA.

Man allegedly leaves 3 kids to play poker

Police arrested yesterday a 43-year-old man for allegedly leaving his three minor children in the house unattended just so he could play poker.

Joel M. Enriquez was arrested for child abuse or neglect.

A $5,000 cash bail was initially imposed for Enriquez's temporary liberty, but Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo released him yesterday.

According to a detective, it was Enriquez's former wife who called the Department of Public Safety on Dec. 15, 2007 at 7:30pm to report a child neglect case.

The detective said that the former wife stated that at 6:30pm she arrived at the residence of Enriquez to bring clothes for her three children, with ages 3, 4, and 7.

Apparently, she discovered that the children were locked inside a small room and a metal spoon was used to secure the latch that locks the room.

A responding police officer observed the spoon and the room with the latch.

The ex-wife told police that Enriquez usually plays and hangs around poker game rooms. Enriquez has custody of the children.

The Division of Youth Services then took custody of the three children.

On the same night at 10:50pm, Enriquez called the police that someone had taken his son. When police asked him why he left his three children unattended, the defendant claimed he had cooked food for them and locked them in the room so he could go and do something.

The officer asked Enriquez to proceed to the police station, but he did not appear.

The former wife later told police that when the police and DYS came and took the children, she met Enriquez at a poker game room in San Jose at 12am and told him that she had called the police.

In December 2005, the former wife landed in the hospital after her then husband Enriquez allegedly repeatedly punched her when she refused to give him their car key.

In January 2006, the defendant's former wife was detained for allegedly lying to police that two men raped her. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Trees uprooted, replanted to preserve new pathway

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Flame trees that were planted along the new pathway in Puerto Rico had to be uprooted and replanted after concerned community members pointed out that the trees' roots may eventually damage the sidewalks.

A project of the Tournament of Champions, the planting of flame trees was originally set at eight feet from the highway.

According to Marianas Visitors Authority board member Marian Aldan-Pierce, when the group first started the project, the Department of Public Works advised them that the trees could be planted eight feet from the highway.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tropical Gardens landscaping staff Tim Mafnas, Joe Iguel and George Adelan plant a flame tree along the Park-to-Port Pathway. Approximately 48 flame trees will be planted around the Army Reserve facility to the entrance to the Port of Saipan for the enhancement and beautification of the new pathway.

"Several trees were already planted when we received an urgent call a couple of days later advising us that it should be 15 feet and not eight feet… The ones that had been planted had to be uprooted and replanted on the western side of the pathway," she said.

The project is being done by Tropical Gardens, and is set to be completed by the end of January. Aldan-Pierce said that Tropical Gardens is uprooting and replanting the flame trees at no extra cost.

Aldan-Pierce said that many of the flame trees were replanted where the pathway is raised anywhere from one foot to two feet.

"In these areas, the parts of the pathway will probably be damaged in 50 or 75 years—if ever," she said.

She pointed out, though, that if one takes a walk at the American Memorial Park and the pathway going down Beach Road they will notice that some of the flame trees are planted at about the same distance and have yet to cause any damage.

"When these flame trees take root and start flowering, this stretch of road will be as colorful, beautiful, and photogenic as Airport Road and Beach Road are today," said Aldan-Pierce.

She added that the trees will provide a nice canopy of shade for those who use the pathway.

"Our flame trees are very unique and there's no other destination in our region that showcases them as well as ours. We want to take advantage of this ability and differentiate ourselves from other destinations," she said.

While some people would prefer to see ironwood trees planted in the area as they are "sturdy and great wind breakers, they do absolutely nothing to enhance the island."

The planting of the trees is a landscaping project of the Tournament of Champions called the Port-To-Park Pathway project.

The Tournament of Champions is an annual two-day golf tournament which started in 1996 and draws participants from within the Pacific Rim.

Aldan-Pierce said, "A huge part of its existence is to assist the community in destination enhancement projects."

The port-to-park pathway landscaping plan was submitted to the Department of Highway Safety in December, and the group received approval shortly after the New Year.

Plantings include flame trees, pritchardia pacifica (fan palms), acalypha, croton, and ixora "Nora Grant".

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Three engines running, outages still hit Saipan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mechanics at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s primary power plant in Lower Base managed to bring another generator back into production yesterday morning, but it still was not enough to provide sufficient electricity for the entire Saipan.

CUC again implemented rotating outages in many areas on the island starting at 11am. The blackouts were set until 9pm yesterday.

CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis said the successful repair of one generator at Power Plant 1, brought to three the number of large generators currently operational.

As these emergency repairs continue, the loss of energy production—estimated at five megawatts yesterday—caused limited and rotating outages.

"All major customers who have reliable generators have assisted CUC by going off of the island grid to limit widespread outages," she said.

Even so, additional energy saving or outages are still required—as CUC previously announced.

Meanwhile, Mathis said a two-hour power outage would decrease water pressure for most customers and to some, even a minor blackout could result in no water at all the following day.

CUC Water Division Manager Mariano Iglecias said that whenever there are blackouts at locations where there are water wells (pumps and treatment stations), the utility agency's operations are impacted in two days.

Mathis said that Iglecias told her that a two-hour power outage will decrease water pressure for most costumers, particularly where water is not flowing 24 hours a day. Water services will not resume normal levels until three hours after the return of electricity.

Iglecias said customers who receive water on a schedule, not 24-hours a day, should maintain water in their personal tanks to compensate for loss of pressure.

He cited that in some areas such as south Garapan (Beach Road or Chalan Lau Lau), even a minor two-hour outage could result in no water the following day, during what would be normal water hours.

This would happen because the wells were down and the water at several wells is shared among several villages, Iglecias said.

"If there is less water or less pressure, it will not move or flow as far," he added.

Yesterday's rotating blackout schedule:

• From 11am to 1pm: Feeder 1 Laterals and Feeder 3 Laterals—Lower China, Upper Miha, Mariana Heights (Bank of Hawaii).

• From 1pm to 3pm: Feeder 2—Beach Road beginning in Tony Roma's area to San Jose intersection.

• From 3pm to 5pm: Feeder 7—Lower Base to Tanapag, Achugao, San Roque, As Matuis, and Marpi.

•From 5pm to 7pm: Kiya 4—San Jose, Susupe, south to Chalan Kanoa.

•From 7pm to 9pm: Kiya 2—Lower Dandan, Afetna, As Perdido, San Antonio, Chalan Piao, southern Chalan Kanoa, As Gonno, and portions of Fina Sisu.

Mathis explained that the schedule for outages depends on customer demand.

"Conservation will limit or help avoid outages. The power plant will not turn off the power unless absolutely necessary," she said.

She said the schedule is also based on only one base-load generator out of production.

"Should another engine fail, more outages will occur," Mathis said.

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UMDA: We're not a buy-and-sell firm

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

United Micronesia Development Association is not a buy-and-sell company.

The company's director of asset management and chief financial officer, Hiroyuki Saito, stressed this during an interview with the *Saipan Tribune* last week.

Saito acknowledged that UMDA may have gotten the reputation of being a buy-and-sell company after it sold Laolao Bay Golf Resort to Kumho-Asiana in February 2007, two years after acquiring the 161-hectare property from Saipan Laulau Development Inc.

According to Saito, UMDA didn't really envision selling Laolao Bay Golf Resort so soon. He said UMDA only agreed to sell the Kagman golf resort after finding out that an international carrier was interested in the property.

"We thought maybe someday we would sell, but not only after two years…people are asking why so early, but it was the best opportunity for the CNMI to have an airline company committed to the development of Saipan and big investment," he said.

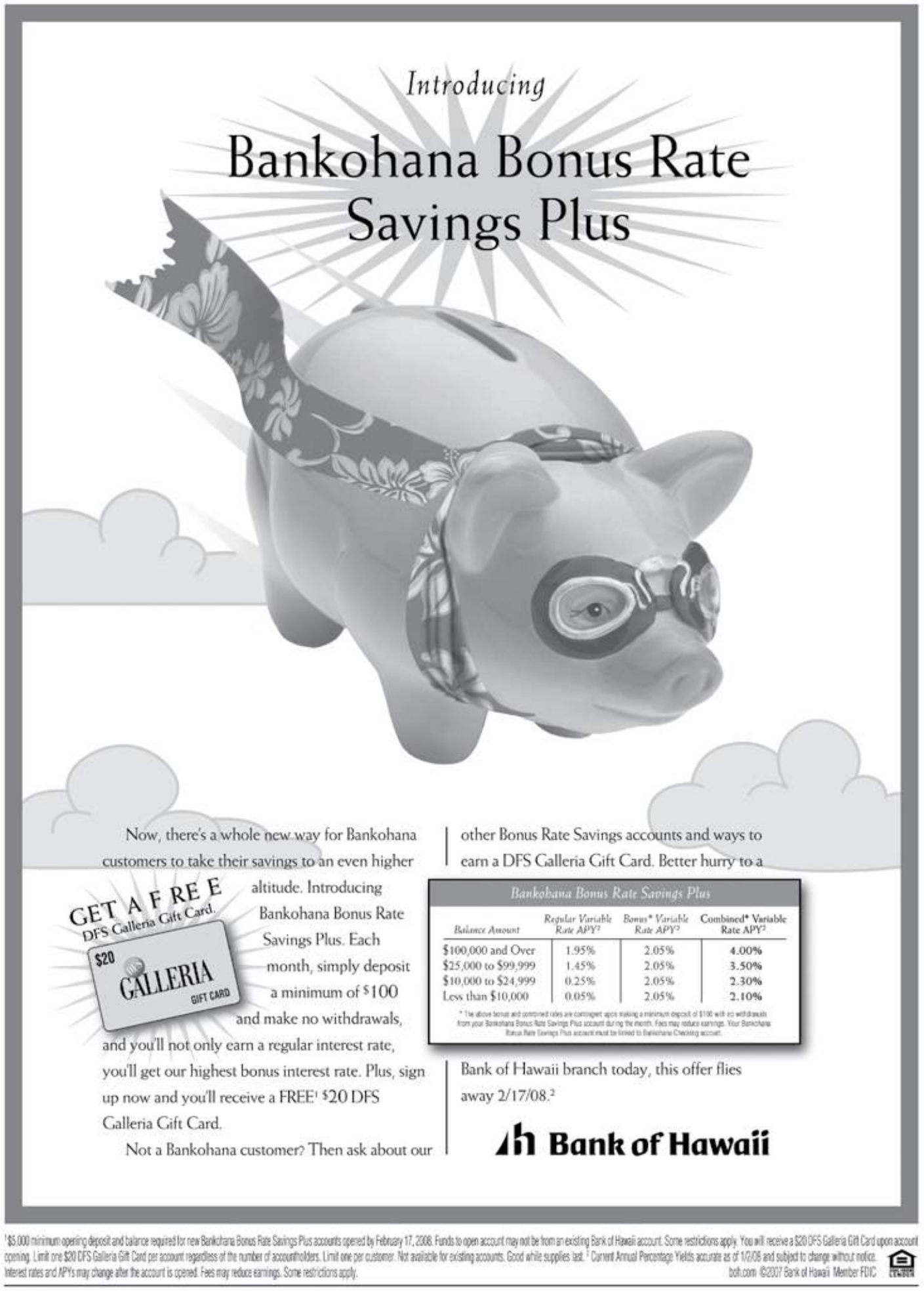
"We are a local company and we have the CNMI government as one of our biggest shareholder. We have responsibility to think about the overall development of the islands. Since there was a commitment from Asiana to increase their number of flights, we proceeded to the next step. Besides, Kumho promised to infuse more money to create a hotel and condominium. We saw that we should take this deal," Saito added.

UMDA is a CNMI corporation principally owned by regional individual and corporate shareholders, including the governments of the CNMI, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Kumho-Asiana plans to build 12-story buildings with 128 rooms, as well as seven luxury villas, on Laolao Bay Golf Resort. The development will also improve facilities for golfers. In addition to three new recreation clubhouses for golfers, current golf courses will be redesigned to meet world golf championship standards.

UMDA hopes to close the sale of Hotel Nikko Saipan Inc. (the owner of the hotel of the same name on the north of Saipan) with JAL Group at the end of the month,

Closing of the transaction is scheduled to occur on Jan. 31, 2008. Effective upon that date, JAL Hotels Co. Ltd, which currently manages the hotel, shall terminate its management contract.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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 18, 2001

Teno rejects changes on nonresident workers law
Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday vetoed a measure revamping labor processing in the CNMI, noting the negative impact it would have on labor relations and its effect on the protection of the rights of both local and nonresident workers. While acknowledging the need to change provisions of the decades-old Nonresident Workers Act, he said the proposal under HB 12-275 will have significant consequences on the current policy.

How safe is the Northern Marianas?
The Department of Public Safety received a total of 11,008 complaints. Of these, 4,297 were official cases handled by the Criminal Investigation Section last year. Some 1,094 cases were sent to the Attorney General's Office for their disposition. Capt. Delbert Sablan said 150 cases were considered closed either due to lack of evidence or the complainants no longer interested to pursue the case.

NMIRF wants 30 percent of tobacco money for GHLIP
As the Legislature moves to identify how the funds received by the CNMI under the tobacco master settlement agreement must be spent, the Retirement Fund yesterday asked the Senate to set aside 30 percent of the total amount for use by the government's Group Health & Life Insurance program. In a letter to Senate President Paul Manglona, NMIRF Board Chair Vicente C. Camacho said medical expenses for the treatment of tobacco related diseases of the members have contributed to the depletion of the GHLI funds.

January 18, 2002

CUC earnings drop 3 percent
Revenue posted by the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. went down by 3 percent in the period from October to December last year, primarily due to a drop in electricity use by business establishments and the loss of the telecommunication fees. At the same time, of the $16.4 million of utility receivables that are considered in default, over $9.6 million-59 percent-are due from CNMI government agencies.

Babauta's help sought on seaport expansion
The Commonwealth Ports Authority will seek the assistance of the new administration in securing the property adjacent to the Saipan seaport for its port expansion program. CPA Board Chair Roman S. Palacios disclosed yesterday that the ports authority will pursue its plan to acquire the needed land to expand its non-seaport tariff -related revenue sources.

CRM may withdraw DPW fine
Pleased with the swift action made by the new leadership of the Department of Public Works to remove hazardous waste near the Tanapag shoreline, Coastal Resources Management Office acting administrator Joaquin D. Salas yesterday assured that he would withdraw the imposed monetary penalty against the department once the cleanup is completed. "I sent my enforcement officers to monitor the status," Salas said. "According to my enforcement officers, there is progress at the site."

January 18, 2003

'Smoking rule too restrictive'
Branding the provision as "too restrictive and unworkable," the Senate passed Thursday a legislative proposal to loosen up the sin tax law, specifically the section that prohibits smoking in restaurants with a 50-or-more seating capacity. Public Law 13-38-the measure that hiked tobacco and alcohol taxes in the CNMI-includes a section that prohibits smoking in any restaurant with a seating capacity for 50 or more, except in a specifically designated smoking areas.

DPH: Pay cut too much for our staff
Low-income employees at the Department of Public Health cannot afford further reductions in their salaries as the agency has been implementing cost-cutting measures since last year. Although his office has yet to conduct a survey among all 600 department staff on the administration's call for a voluntary five-hour reduction per pay period, DPH Secretary James U. Hofschneider said a preliminary assessment showed that employees in the lower echelon could not absorb further pay reductions.

Saipan, Tinian post arrivals growth

POWER PLANT JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s main power plant in Lower Base. Companies from the United States, Japan, Singapore, and Australia have been hired and are now proceeding to make significant improvements to Saipan's primary power plant.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Visitor arrivals for Saipan and Tinian increased slightly in December 2007, while tourists to Rota continued to fall last month, according to the latest figures from the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Saipan welcomed a total of 35,427 tourists in December 2007, which represents a 1-percent increase from the 35,155 recorded in the same period in 2006.

Of the arrivals, 16,274 came from Japan, 11,615 from Korea, 3,470 from China, 1,527 from Guam, 655 from Russia, with the rest hailing from the mainland U.S., Philippines, Taiwan, and other smaller markets.

According to the MVA, Saipan's Japanese market shrunk by 13 percent last month, while other segments like the Philippines (-55 percent), U.S. mainland (-12 percent), China (-13 percent), and Guam (-11 percent) similarly posted double-digit percentage losses in arrivals.

Only the Korean and Russian segments posted growth with the latter increasing by 44 percent and the former a whopping 156 percent. Taiwan also recorded an incremental increase of 20 percent last month.

Tinian, for its part, saw a similar 1-percent jump in tourist arrivals last month to 4,839 from the 4,780 the gaming capital of the Northern Marianas welcomed in December 2006.

Japanese tourists this time only came in second to arrivals on Tinian from China. Tourists from the People's Republic of China totaled 2,784 last month, followed by Japan with 759, Saipan with 441, Korea with 369, Guam with 54, the mainland U.S. with 18, and other markets with 14.

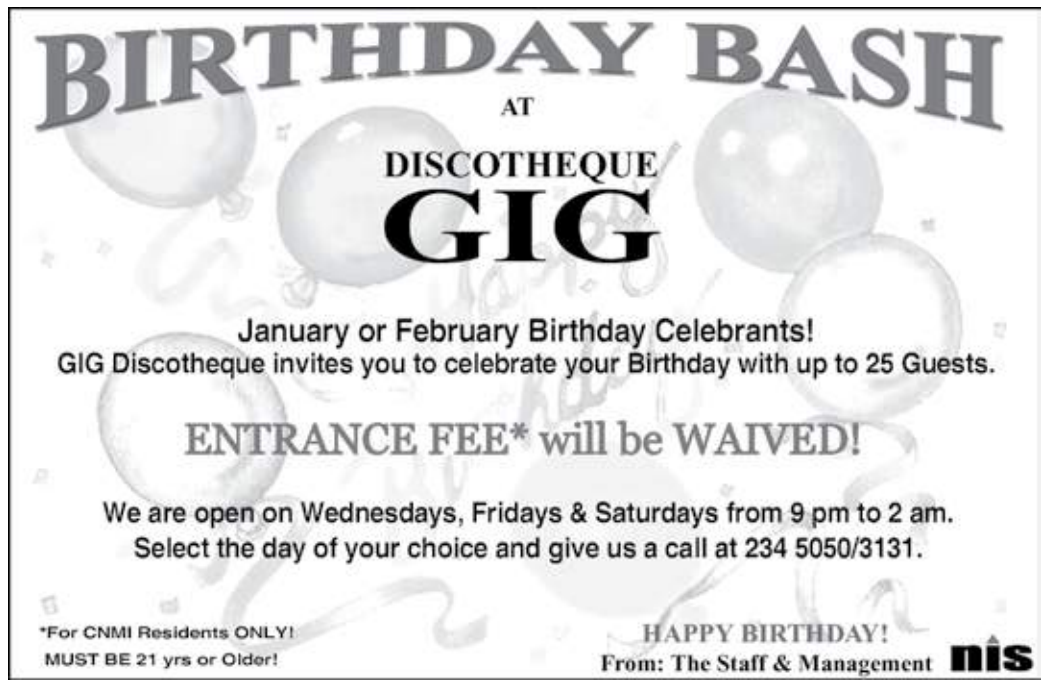
Arrivals from Korea jumped 76 percent, while those from the mainland U.S. and Guam increase by 125 percent and 32 percent, respectively. Tinian's Japan and Russia market , meanwhile, decreased by 3 percent and 2 percent.

While their neighboring islands enjoyed slight increases in arrivals, the same cannot be said of the southernmost landmass of the Northern Marianas chain.

According to the MVA, tourists to Rota fell by 19 percent in December 2007 to 783 from the 970 recorded in December 2006.

Arrivals via Guam totaled 338 tourists, broken down into 158 from Japan, two from Korea, 74 from Guam, 95 from the mainland U.S., one from Russian, and seven from other markets.

Inter-island arrivals to Rota (from Saipan and Tinian), meanwhile, totaled 444—175 from Japan, 14 from Korea, 121 from the United States (including Guam), 102 from the Philippines, and 32 from other markets.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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

On thin ice

First things first. The U.S. Interior Department should stick to that useful truism instead of approving oil drilling in polar bear habitat before deciding whether the bears need protection from such drilling.

Last week, the agency's Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it was delaying its decision on whether the steady loss of Arctic ice floes, caused by climate change, should qualify the polar bear as a threatened species. Threatened status would set off various protections—most important, determining critical habitat for the bears' survival.

Yet there was no delay the week before, when the Mineral Management Service, another arm of the agency, decided to allow oil and gas exploration leases in nearly 30 million acres of the Chukchi Sea off northwest Alaska, prime polar bear habitat that has been among the areas most affected by global warming. The lease sale is scheduled for Feb. 6.

The Interior Department has been all too eager to sell mineral rights regardless of environmental considerations. But this latest sale, combined with the postponed decision on the polar bear, is enough to raise even an oil baron's eyebrows. Listing the bear as threatened would put the Chukchi lease sale on choppy waters; but what if the bear isn't listed until a few days after the sale takes place? Oil exploration might not affect the bears particularly, but the Mineral Management Service isn't the entity capable of making the determination. In fact, no one can make that decision without the kind of study that would be required if the bears were listed as threatened.

Admittedly, the decision on the polar bear is a thornier one than Fish and Wildlife has faced before. It would be the first species listed as imperiled as a result of global warming, and the implications are complex. But the solution is simple. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne has the authority and the obligation to halt the Chukchi lease sale until the decision about the listing is made and the necessary environmental studies are completed. This might sound insane given prices at the gas pump, but exploration leases are long-term investments, many iffy years from providing new sources of fuel. Even then, any finds would provide only a very temporary palliative to the nation's energy woes.

Reliance on fossil fuels has been one of the major causes of the global warming that now forces the government to consider the polar bears' plight. It would be too painful an irony if the Interior Department allowed that same reliance to ravage the bears' already diminishing habitat.

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EVEREST
"ANOTHER FEW WEARY STEPS AND THERE WAS NOTHING ABOVE BUT THE SKY" - SIR EDMUND HILLARY (1919-2008)

Jobs return to America

By RICHARD A. PIERCE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Richard A. Pierce is Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's Special Assistant for Trade Relations and Economic Affairs. He is a former executive director of the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association.

User fee collections in Saipan's remaining garment factories reached $577, 819.00 in December, 2007. This is down 13 percent from last month, 53% from December last year, and at that rate, translates to the CNMI receiving approximately $12-$15 million in direct revenue from the factories in 2008.

I think everyone understands that's not going to happen, as 7 firms have announced their closure in the next month, and my estimates say the CNMI will take less than $10 million in direct revenue, with an additional $15 million in surrounding business activity government revenue before the last factories fold up in about a year.

Of course, that's assuming the U.S. Congress will heed warnings about economic disruption in the CNMI with a second minimum wage increase, in May, 2008.

American Samoa is hard at work to delay any second increase, as well, but if the second increase does occur as scheduled, the CNMI would be very fortunate to generate $130 million in revenue from its shrunken economy in FY 2008.

The factories just can't compete any longer with the cost of doing business escalating, and competition driving factories to relocate in foreign countries in Asia, Malaysia and Latin America.

This isn't just due to increased costs, but due to the proliferation of free trade agreements (FTAs) and preference programs in recent years, whereby the U.S. insular possessions – the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands – face tougher regulations on products sold to the U.S. mainland than many foreign nations.

United States Free Trade Agreements are everywhere the U.S. wants to remain engaged economically, as well as, in effect, following Rockefeller's words of wisdom, "the answer to world peace is world trade". The serendipitous side of breaking down trade barriers being making friends by buying spots on the globe has always made sense to me.

But, the CNMI has already been bought and paid for.

FTAs exist everywhere. Most people don't know that the World Trade Organization is one big global free trade agreement for 151 countries.

There are scads of regional FTAs. FTAs of the Americas, ASEAN for southeast Asia, NAFTA, Middle East Initiatives, Asian-Pacific Economic Co-ops 21 members, CAFTA, AGOA for African nations, ATPDEA in the Andes and bilateral agreements with Israel, Chile, Panama, Malaysia and 26 other foreign countries around the globe.

Almost all of these free trade agreements have come into existence since the United States negotiated in 1978 with the CNMI to utilize a special tariff privilege created via another FTA, the Caribbean Basin Initiative. The CNMI, and the other insular areas were given the special tariff privilege, General Note 3(a)(iv)(A) of the HTSUS.

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands first used it in apparel and rum, Guam had watch and sweater factories in 1980s, the CNMI first used 3(a) in 1984, and the tuna canneries and apparel plants opened in American Samoa later

The United States continues to negotiate FTAs to this day. Chile, Singapore, New Zealand and Brunei are working on a deal. The CAFTA amendments are near implementation. NAFTA provisions are fully implemented. New deals were made with Middle East countries last year.

Haiti finally made its way through the Congress with its FTA last year while I attended and listened to Wyclef Jean literally sing his way through the Cannon House Office Building and the Senate Dirksen Building in Washington, D.C. lobbying for its passage.

The CNMI provided a formula to the United States Congress and the Administration in 2003. Simply amending the value-added requirements of General Note 3(a) to put the insular areas on an equivalent with all the new FTAs would allow for the industry to compete with all the FTAs and continue in the CNMI.

Don't misunderstand that this is just about making men's shirts and ladies' blouses. An amendment of General Note 3(a) would allow for production of other items never manufactured in the CNMI.

You'd think with the exact formula presented to the U.S. Congress five years ago, introduced by Senators Akaka and Craig, and Representative Flake on two separate occasions, where a simple amendment of our tariff schedule and a separate wage tier system would have 100 percent guaranteed the continuation of our apparel industry and a lessening of our economic situation where thousands of people from here and abroad are losing jobs, the Congress would have acted by now, unless they had some awfully good reason for not doing so.

We've come a long ways since the Interior Department's Assistant Secretary Richard Montoya told the Saipan Chamber of Commerce in 1986 that he had good news, and bad news, for the people of the CNMI. The good news, he said, was that the economy was looking terrific, and the bad news was that the garment industry was going to have to be eliminated in the CNMI because it was utilizing General Note 3(a) as no one in the federal government had "envisioned".

Assistant Secretary Montoya had told us that it was a great opportunity for the CNMI to locate manufacturers in the CNMI only 3 years before his visit in 1986. That just shows you the power of strong lobbyists in Washington. The domestic industry and the unions had made an impression with those in power.

The unions would be back in 1999, but that's another story of abuse and power and how, once you're bought and paid for, the CNMI became a victim of federal authority.

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Who holds the bag?

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ed's column runs on Fridays. Visit Ed at SaipanBlog.com.

As the CNMI keeps proving, like a stuck record, that wishful thinking and nepotism are poor substitutes for sound economic policy and competent stewardship, we're getting closer to the point where reality is going to hit home. If you think things are stressful and contentious here at the opening of 2008, just wait until the end of the year rolls in.

In the news realm, I think we're in for a very spicy year, since the center of life and news in the Commonwealth is local politics, and that's going to get wild. The recent elections were just a warm up for the real show.

The people want to hear, and they will hear, simple answers and feel-good solutions. Throw in a few extra "committees" to satisfy the CNMI's lust for bureaucratic "solutions" to problems that the bureaucrats doesn't understand, and, well, there you have the scene.

Eventually, though, some people will finally see through the fog of rhetoric, and a percentage of them are going to get downright angry.

So, when contentious fur starts flying, and the economic scores are finally being tallied, who will really be left holding the bag? That's a huge issue. So let's take a peek:

How about the alien workers? Are they the big losers in this? I'm certainly not downplaying the impact on them of losing their jobs, but I don't want to lose sight of the personal assets that they carry with them: Most have a great work ethic, most have solid job skills, and most are used to dealing with the reality and constraints of their surroundings.

I'd rather have that inventory of characteristics than harbor a permanent sense of entitlement, which is what a vast portion of the Commonwealth electorate has. Which is to say: Alien workers can work and produce wealth. A lot of folks can't. So, economically speaking, who is fit for success, and who is the cripple?

As for the Commonwealth's professional class, I'll let you draw your own conclusions, but, as for my pals and I, we don't own land in the Commonwealth, and few of us were crazy enough to lease it. This is a win for us, since we can continue to enjoy the CNMI's falling rents. Heck, I know guys who essentially have lived in hotels, loosely using Saipan as "home" while jetting to Guam, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, or the Philippines, as the dictates of business require. This kind of come-as-you-please lifestyle is, for some, a tropical dream come true. If, by contrast, the CNMI had a functional economy, land rights, and a mortgage market, the cost of housing would be expensive, and where's the fun in that?

In fact, these days, on Saipan you can rent a nice apartment, or even a house, for less than what your property tax would be in the U.S.! Maybe that's not free living, but it's mighty close! Article 12 was the best thing that ever happened to us.

I'll conclude, then, that professionals, or at least those with an economic clue, are not the real losers here.

OK, then maybe the local politicians are the losers? No way. They'll do very well indeed.

Who ARE the losers, then? Now that we've eliminated the alien workers, the professionals, and the politicians, it looks to me like it's the electorate that is left holding the bag. Whooie, what a stressful lifestyle that must be, to build a system in which you must permanently curry favor with various politicians just to have a job, income, and status; it might be fun when there's money in the treasury, but when the free money stops, the competition for it gets ever more vicious.

In summary, the electorate is going to wind up suffering for the crushingly large local government that it built, a local government that has essentially absorbed all the wealth in the Commonwealth. There's nothing left. Those who are left holding the bag won't be happy about it, and this will set the tone for the coming year.

We all have the power to fly

BETTER LIVING

By DAVID KHORRAM, M.D.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

David Khorram, MD is a board certified ophthalmologist and director of Marianas Eye Institute. Comments and questions are welcome. Call 235-9090 or email him through www.MarianasEye.com, or leave comments at www.MarianasEye.blogspot.com. *Copyright © 2008 David Khorram*

This is one of my favorite stories, and it pops into my head at various times of my life. It's just another along the line of "there is an extraordinary being inside each ordinary person." The Force, the power to fly, to be free of our constraints, is there for all of us. The biggest limitations are self-imposed, driven by fear. It is we who resist, out of fear. Conquer fear, use the Force, and you become the rarest of creatures, a Savior, a Jedi. What holds you back from letting go of the fear? The story is from Richard Bach's book, *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah.*

■ ■ ■

Once there lived a village of creatures along the bottom of a great crystal river.

The current of the river swept silently over them all—young and old, rich and poor, good and evil, the current going its own way, knowing only its own crystal self.

Each creature in its own manner clung tightly to the twigs and rocks of the river bottom, for clinging was their way of life, and resisting the current what each had learned from birth.

But one creature said at last, "I am tired of clinging. Though I cannot see it with my eyes, I trust that the current knows where it is going. I shall let go, and let it take me where it will. Clinging, I shall die of boredom."

The other creatures laughed and said, "Fool! Let go, and that current you worship will throw you tumbled and smashed across the rocks, and you will die quicker than boredom!"

But the one heeded them not, and taking a breath did let go, and at once was tumbled and smashed by the current across the rocks.

Yet in time, as the creature refused to cling again, the current lifted him free from the bottom, and he was bruised and hurt no more.

And the creatures downstream, to whom he was a stranger, cried, "See a miracle! A creature like ourselves, yet he flies! See the Messiah, come to save us all!"

And the one carried in the current said, "I am no more Messiah than you. The river delights to lift us free, if only we dare let go. Our true work is this voyage, this adventure."

But they cried the more, "Savior!" all the while clinging to the rocks, and when they looked again he was gone, and they were left alone making legends of a Savior.

Letters to the Editor

Clarification on curfew proposal

In response to Mr. Don Cohen's Jan. 14, 2008, letter to the editor regarding Senate Bill 15-104, "[T]o provide stricter penalties for those that do not comply with the curfew law." I am in total agreement with Mr. Cohen that the vast majority of our young men and women in the CNMI are respectful, well behaved, and responsible. Moreover, this is a reflection of responsible parenting in our community by mothers, fathers and guardians that care enough about their children to establish sensible household rules, including reasonable curfew hours.

Recently, the Commonwealth has seen a number of crimes that have involved young members of the community during late night hours. Recognizing this problem the CNMI Youth Congress passed a resolution encouraging the Legislature to provide stricter penalties for those who would facilitate youth in breaking the law. Finding merit in the idea, the Senate introduced SB 15-104, as drafted by the Youth Congress, which proposes to increase the penalties for those offending adults.

Curfew laws have been on the books in the Commonwealth since the late 1980s. Therefore, this legislation does not create a new curfew for teens, as Mr. Cohen would claim. Further, it should be pointed out that SB 15-104 does not amend existing law as to penalties in respect to minors. It does, however, significantly increase the penalties for those, other than the minor or guardian, who would assist, aid, abet or encourage any minor to violate any provision of the existing curfew law. This would include, and is intended for, those adults who would enlist a minor in the commission of a crime, such as the rash of late night robberies the CNMI has seen in recent months. It should also be noted that the curfew law has always provided numerous exemptions for those legitimate activities that the youth may be engaged in during curfew hours, including entertainment and employment.

I would encourage Mr. Cohen in the future to either call or meet with members personally to discuss concerns regarding proposed legislature. I can assure Mr. Cohen that my office door is open at all times and that I am always willing to listen to the public's concerns.

Pete P. Reyes
Senate President
Capital Hill

The crown jewel of the Marianas

Awhile back, I was reading an article dated Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2007, titled "Wonderful Rota" by Mr. Bruce Bateman. It was in the Opinion section of the Saipan Tribune. The kind author mentioned and informed us about how he enjoyed spending his Constitution Day holiday weekend on a small island. He mentioned how friendly and accommodating the people are, and provided a professional opinion as to how to attract tourists to our beautiful and friendly island. I was very pleased with this great commentary about our little known island in the opinion section on Saipan Tribune's website.

In addition to the article that Mr. Bateman wrote, I was both pleasantly surprised and touched by another writer who traveled very far to visit this small, beautiful, and friendly isle. The story was published on Friday, Jan. 11, 2008, titled "Rota: The Friendly Island." The editor's note indicated: "Mr. Jeffrey Groberman is a travel feature writer based in Vancouver." The article also indicated that the story was published throughout Canada two years ago. In the column, the writer mentioned how fabulous the vegetation is, and how crystal clear the diving spots are, and the extraordinary spirit of welcome unique to the people of Rota. Reading these articles on the Internet warms the hearts of natives of Rota and gives its people confidence that we indeed have what it takes to be a major player in the tourism industry of the Marianas, based simply on what we've done for years: welcome the stranger, and protect our island's natural beauty. I sincerely thank both Mr. Bruce Bateman and Mr. Jeffrey Groberman for their kind words and wish that they come back to visit Rota where friends are waiting.

Rota is on the verge of realizing its full economic potential, in ecotourism and in entertainment industries. The majority of the people on Rota voted "yes" to the Rota Casino Initiative of 2007 and at the same time entrusted their future to our island's elected leaders during the mid-term election. It is up to our leaders to keep that trust and make good decisions for the betterment of our island, elders, and future leaders. As a community it is time to stand together and help each other prepare for the prosperity to come. It is our obligation to keep our island green, trash free, and do what we do best: offer our guests our incomparable hospitality. I believe that if we each do our part and give back to our island, people from different walks of life will appreciate the rare glimpse of the true spirit of Chamorro culture: generosity and a warm welcome found nowhere else in the world. If we protect our God-given gifts in nature, we can share the Mariana's true treasure with our friends from near and far.

Joey Anthony Quitugua
Songsong, Rota

A word of appreciation

Words alone cannot express how thankful I am to the countless folks whom I came across and spent time with during my recent homecoming visit to Saipan. Nevertheless, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to all my family and friends who demonstrated the true character of our island heritage during my recent vacation. To my dad, Luis B. Camacho and Susan; my parents-in-law Ben and Annie Duenas; my brothers, my sister and their families, my countless uncles and aunts, my kumpaires and kumaires, my primos and primas, my kuniados and kiniadas from San Roque to Capital Hill, Kagman, Papago, San Vicente, Gualo Rai, Chalan Kiya, and all over; my D-9ers baseball teammates, and the San Roque Parish hu nanae hamyo un sen dankulu na Si Yuus Maase yan agradesimiento. You all know who you are, and I am extremely grateful for the time, energy, generosity and warm hospitality that all of you exhibited. Your warm welcome and genuine farewell will never be forgotten.

Maj. Lawrence F. Camacho
United States Army
Waegwon, South Korea

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
▲84° ▼79°	▲82° ▼75°	▲80° ▼73°	▲80° ▼73°	▲81° ▼74°

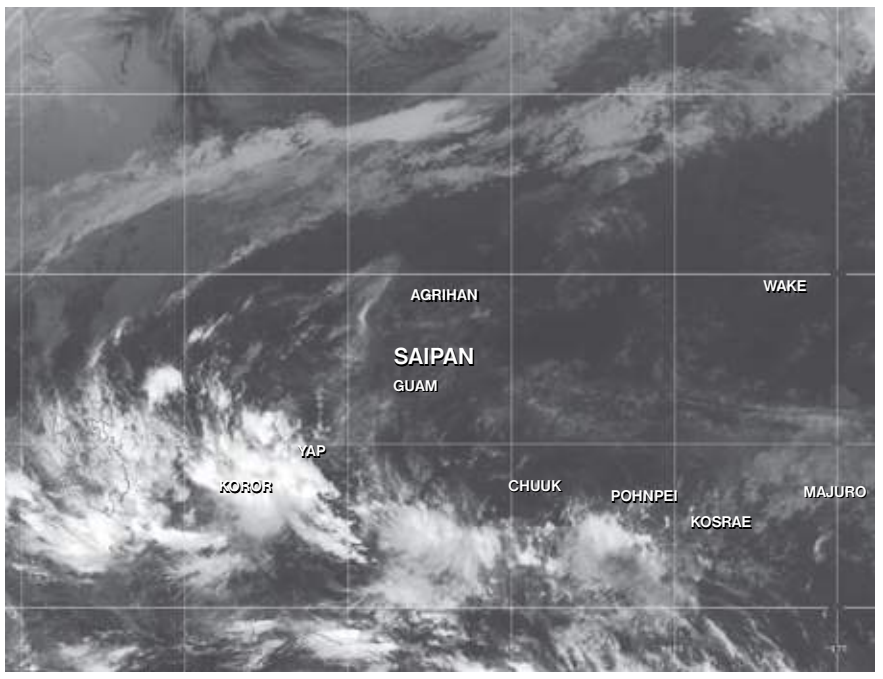
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲83	▼75
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼80
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲77	▼63
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲32	▼23
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲66	▼59
Honolulu	Showers	▲76	▼67
London	Rain	▲50	▼41
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲70	▼47
Manila	Showers	▲82	▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲82	▼59
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲77	▼67
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲43	▼30
Osaka	Cloudy	▲41	▼28
Paris	Rain	▲52	▼42
Pusan	Sunny	▲45	▼37
Rome	Cloudy	▲56	▼40
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲43	▼32
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼44
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲36	▼21
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲45	▼34
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, THURSDAY, JAN. 17, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough stretches from 4N130E to EQ151E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough can be found 125 miles north and south of a line that stretches from 6N130E to 3N150E. A trough of low pressure stretches from 3N154E to EQ157E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with this trough are located south of Chuuk and Pohnpei between 1N and 6N from 151E to 160E. Trade-wind convergence is producing an area of low clouds and showers between 1N and 6N from 163E to 180. A cold front stretches from 25N135E to 20N130E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and northwest of this front.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

04:58AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
09:03AM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
02:35PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
10:36PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47AM	6:07PM
Saturday	6:47AM	6:08PM
Sunday	6:47AM	6:09PM
Monday	6:47AM	6:09PM
Tuesday	6:47AM	6:10PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	01:40PM	02:07AM
Saturday	02:39PM	03:12AM
Sunday	03:42PM	04:18AM
Monday	04:48PM	05:21AM
Tuesday	05:52PM	06:19AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contribution are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Saipan-Shanghai

MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

Shanghai-Saipan

MU 589	8:05am	3:00am+1	1,5

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

JOETEN'S

Give Your Budget A Break!

Bargain In Every Aisle!

Sale starts on Jan. 18 to 23, 2008

Addidas Tee Shirt Assorted $12.99

Mens Shirts $16.99

Ladies Disne Missy Tee Shirts Assrt. $9.99

Ladies Attention S/S Top $5.99

Boys Long Sleeve White Shirt $9.99

Boys 2 Set Assrt. 50 cent $9.99

Girls Verbage Print Tees $4.99

Girls French Toast Denim Pant $10.99

Infant baby Booties Assorted $1.19

Best Buys!

Bath Gift Pack Set
$11.99

Best Buys!

Proctor Silex Sandwich Maker
$19.99

Best Buys!

Presto Power Pop Corn Popper
$19.99

Best Buys!

Cook & Carry Pan 3x9x2
$8.99

Best Buys!

Martex Cotton Bath Towel
$11.99

New Arrivals!

Suave Overnite Cream 2oz. $4.49

Sentinel Cosmetics Puffs 100's $1.39

Lander Bubblebath 25oz. $1.50

Alberto VO5 Shampoo 15oz. $1.29

Daily Renewal Gel or Hair Spray $2.39

Mystic Body Spray $2.39

Proctor Silex 4 SLC Toaster Oven Broiler $33.99

Rival Hot Pot Express 32oz $16.99

Cedar Angler Broom $9.99

Toilet Bowl Brush $1.39

U.S. Produce

Look for these and more at savings throughout our store!

Bananas 79¢ /lb.

Large Brown Eggs 1 Dozen $1.99 /dz

Cello Red Apples 3lb. Bag $3.59 /bg.

Green Apples $1.19 /lb

Sleeved Celery 69¢ /lb.

Brown Potatoes 65¢ /lb.

U.S. Onions 59¢ /lb.

Napa Cabbage 79¢ /lb.

Green Cabbage 69 /lb.

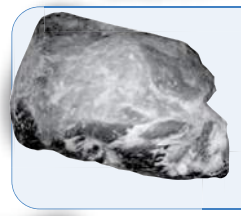
Now Available!
Japanese Tangerine, Fuji Apples and Nashi Pears

Visit us for more savings at our Produce section!

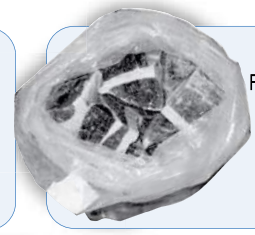
Supermarket

LOW LOW PRICE

Danish Pork Spare Ribs 10 lbs.
$14.99/cs.



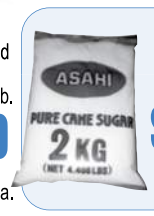
New Zealand Boneless Beef Clod $1.99 /lb.



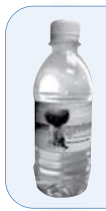
New Zealand Beef For Stew Family Bag 7lb. $14.99 /ea.

Chicken Leg Quarters 22lb. $16.99 /cs.

New Zealand 1/2 Shell Mussels 2.2lb. $5.99 /ea.



Asahi Sugar 4.4 lb $1.79 /ea.



Hafa Adai Water 24/350ml $6.50 /cs..

Kristov Vodka Cruisers 275ml. $1.49 /ea.

Gain Powder Laundry Detergen 120 loadst $17.99 /ea.

Diamond G Calrose Rice 50lb. $20.99 /bg.

Sunwhite Calrose Rice 50lb. $17.99 /bg.

Golden Monkey Jasmine Rice 50lbs. $18.99 /bg.

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Mileage: 10098
License #: ACA-204
$8,999

USED CARS

STOCK	YEAR	MODEL	TRANS.	MILEAGE	COLOR	LICENSE #	PRICE
TOYOTA SEDANS							
CONSIGNMENT	2006	CAMRY XLE 4DR	AUTO	28890	L. BLUE	ABX-669	18,999
U07-098T	2004	CAMRY 4DR	AUTO	27675	SILVER	ACE-355	13,799
R07-025F	2004	CAMRY LE 4DR	AUTO	43820	BEIGE	ACC-860	13,999
R07-016F	2005	MATRIX	AUTO	19890	GRAY	ABV-759	11,299
R07-022B	2005	MATRIX	AUTO	27658	SILVER	ACG-443	12,099
GM CARS							
U08-002P	2006	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	9706	BLUE	ACE-586	8,999
U07-123P	2006	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	9500	GRAY	ACE-688	8,999
R07-031F	2005	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	68515	YELLOW	ABY-169	8,999
R07-035F	2005	AVEO 4DR.	AUTO	63367	WHITE	ACD-026	8,699
R07-013F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	39164	ORANGE	ADO-022	7,899
R07-023F	2005	AVEO HATCHBACK	AUTO	32635	WHITE	ABX-679	9,599
TOYOTA TRUCKS							
R07-036B	2003	TACOMA 4X4 D/CAB	AUTO	85270	RED	ABR-739	15,999
R07-038F	2004	TACOMA 4X4 XTRACAB	AUTO	49609	BEIGE	ABV-159	11,899
R07-026F	2004	TACOMA 4X2 REG/CAB	MANUAL	46550	WHITE	ACA-308	9,999
OTHER CARS & TRUCKS							
U07-106P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	50416	SILVER	ADF-401	8,999
U07-107P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	48755	SILVER	ADF-421	8,999
U07-108P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	45099	SILVER	ADF-431	8,999
U07-109P	2004	HONDA CIVIC DX DR.	AUTO	43869	SILVER	ADF-371	8,999
U07-034T	2000	NISSAN MAXIMA GXE 4DR.	AUTO	68648	WHITE	ACT-812	8,399
U07-104T	2003	NISSAN MURANO SE	AUTO	32000	PEWT	ABZ-615	16,799
U07-095T	1999	MAZDA MILLENIA 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	91014	SILVER	ABP-583	7,999
U07-118T	2004	MAZDA MX3 4DR. SEDAN	AUTO	33366	SILVER	ADH-312	12,799
CONSIGNMENT	2001	FORD ESCAPE	AUTO	39530	BLUE	ABW-458	10,899
VANS							
U07-096	2000	SIENNA XLE	AUTO	92766	GRAY	ACO-561	8,999
SPORT UTILITY							
U07-064T	2001	4RUNNER 4WD	AUTO	56882	CHAMPAIGNE	ABY-153	13,599
U07-050T	2002	RAV4 4DR. 4WD	AUTO	39182	WHITE	ABW-677	12,799
U07-007T	2004	RAV4 4DR. 4WD	AUTO	41649	BEIGE	ACB-455	14,999
U07-082P	2004	RAV4 4DR. 2WD	AUTO	68919	GRAY		13,599

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2x6x16		$14.50/Pc
2x6x20	$11.90/Pc	

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	Regular	Treated
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2x4x14	$5.00/Pc	$7.00/Pc
2x4x16	$6.00/Pc	$8.20/Pc
2x4x18	$6.30/Pc	$9.60/Pc
2x4x20	$7.20/Pc	$10.50/Pc

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'Designated driver' found guilty of traffic violations

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who was serving as a "designated driver" when pulled over by a police officer has been found not guilty of driving under the influence of alcohol and reckless driving.

However, Superior Court Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama found Elbert G. Muel guilty of failing to submit to a breath test, driving on the right side of the highway, and driving a vehicle with an expired registration.

Lizama fined Muel $175 and suspended his license for six months.

"The first three months of this sentence are without privileges, which means the defendant may not drive at all," he said.

Lizama

The last three months, the judge said, are with privileges, which means Muel may only drive to and from his work and home.

Lizama said that, although Muel was seen driving erratically, the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he was driving under the influence of alcohol or that his driving was reckless, resulting in the not guilty finding.

On the failure to submit to a breath test, Lizama noted a signed document on the record with the defendant's signature declining the test.

As for driving on the right side, the judge said the government presented sufficient evidence that Muel's vehicle swerved from one lane to another.

About the expired registration, Lizama said the government presented evidence to this effect.

According to court records, on Jan. 21, 2007 at 3:48am, Muel was witnessed driving a vehicle erratically on Beach Road near Carmen Safeway.

Police officers Frankie S. Pangelinan and Glenn Rabago stopped Muel.

According to the police report and the officers' testimony, defendant's vehicle was seen swerving. Once stopped, Muel had an odor of alcohol on his breath and presented an expired registration. He also refused to submit to a breathalyzer test.

At the bench trial last week, the defendant said that, although he consumed alcohol that day, it had been more than eight hours prior to his driving the vehicle.

Muel stated that he consumed three beers at 4pm and then went home and fell asleep. He was contacted by friends as the designated driver, and was pulled over nearly 12 hours later.

In his written order issued yesterday, Lizama said that notwithstanding the evidence presented regarding the swerving, there is insufficient proof for the charges.

Lizama said he believes the intervening 8 to 10 hours between consumption and operation of the vehicle was enough time for the alcohol to leave Muel's system.

On the breath test charge, the judge said it was reasonable for the officers to demand a breath test because of the presence of an alcoholic odor on Muel's breath as well as the officer's observation of defendant's swerving.

"The officers testified and defendant admitted that he refused to submit to a breath test," Lizama said.

On driving on the right side, Lizama said that due to the presence of the original citation and subsequent testimony by the officers, the court finds Muel guilty of that charge.

Relating to the expired registration, Lizama said Muel admitted during the trial that he presented the officers with expired registration.

"The admission and evidence is more than sufficient to find the defendant guilty of driving with an expired registration," he pointed out.

4 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has raised the red flag on four beach sites on Saipan and advises the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours.

The division said that water samples taken from the DPW Channel Bridge, South Puerto Rico Dump, Garapan Beach drainage, and Sugar Dock were found to contain excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria—enterococci—that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

However, studies have also shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

DEQ analyzes samples of marine recreational and storm drainage water from Saipan's coast every Wednesday. This week, the division analyzed samples taken from 38 locations.

DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions. ***(DEQ)***

Essay and logo contest deadlines are extended

The Hafa Adai-Tirow Spirit Committee, a new ad-hoc committee of the Marianas Visitors Authority's board of directors, is kicking off its work with a logo contest for all island artists and an essay contest for students grades 7-12. The deadline of submission for both logo designs and essays is Jan. 31, 2008 by 4:30pm. Submissions must be delivered to the Marianas Visitors Authority main office located in San Jose.

The logo contest is open to all resident artists of the CNMI of any age. Logo designs must illustrate the theme "The Hafa Adai and Tirow Way!", must incorporate the theme text, must work well in black and white, and must work well when reduced to 2.5 inches. Artists may submit as many logo designs as they wish. All submissions must include the name, telephone number and address of the artist. Logo designs must be submitted to the front office of the Marianas Visitors Authority, San Jose, Beach Road. A first place prize of $300 will be awarded for the first place logo, $200 for second place and $100 for third place. Awards will be presented at the Garapan Street Market.

The essay contest is open to all CNMI students grades 7-12. Essays must address the question, "What can I do to show 'The Hafa Adai and Tirow Way!'" Essays must be between 400-500 words, be the original work of the student, and be typewritten on plain white paper or legibly handwritten on white lined paper. All submissions must include the name of the student, school, grade,, address and phone number. A first place prize of $250, second place prize of $150 and a third place prize of $50 will be awarded. Awards will be presented at the Garapan Street Market.

Complete logo contest and essay contest guidelines are available at the Marianas Visitors Authority office, the NMI Museum Office, or you may contact Robert Hunter at telephone 664-2160/4 if you would like the guidelines faxed or e-mailed to you. ***(PR)***

MOBIL-FUNDED CLEANUP CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Friends of the Mariana Islands members have their picture taken during their drainage project weekend cleanup at Tun Joaquin Doi Street, funded by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. The group's special adviser, William P. Matson, joined the group last Sunday morning at Tun Joaquin Doi Street.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Happy birthday greetings go out to Chris Tenorio, who is celebrating his birthday today, Jan. 18, 2008. Greetings coming from somebody special!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Beautify CNMI finalizes goals for the year

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ
CORRESPONDENT

Beautify CNMI met for their first meeting of 2008 last week. Some 15 individuals from the community representing government agencies and community groups such as Coral Reef Management Office, Public School System, Department of Public Works, Resource Conservation & Development, Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, Isa CNMI, Marianas Dive, PAWS, and Friends of the Mariana Islands participated.

The group set several goals for the year.

The most important thing in 2008 will be expanding the Beautify CNMI campaign to Tinian and Rota. The group agreed that while having been very successful on Saipan over the last year and a half, the campaign was originally intended to be a CNMI-wide coalition. Some of the chairs are going to spend their own money going to Tinian and Rota this year to recruit people to lead Beautify CNMI efforts on those islands.

Beautify CNMI is composed of several committees. The different committees have already set out goals for themselves and they will add to these goals in the coming weeks as they have their first committee meetings.

The Restoration Committee wants to reinforce the ongoing weekly beach and road clean-ups. They hope to recruit a class or a club at every single school this year to adopt a spot. Beautify CNMI will work with them to coordinate supplies. They would also like to see regular trash pickup at several beaches, similar to the trash pickup available at Wing Beach and paid for by MINA.

The Restoration Committee will also continue planting trees and will support the Laulau Revegetation project in 2008. In 2006 they helped the CNMI Watershed group plant hundreds of native saplings and in 2007 they planted almost 200 Flame Trees. They hope to continue with this success.

The Animal Welfare Committee's number one goal this year is to pass an animal cruelty bill. They will also continue to education the public on animal issues.

The Parks & Trails committee will continue to push for the creation of a Commonwealth Parks System. Their goal is to create a system of hiking trails that would link the different parks and conservation areas on Saipan and that would stretch from Suicide Cliff down to Susupe Lake. They are also interested in creating a private reserve to help the CNMI meet the goals of the Micronesia Challenge.

To further promote the Micronesia Challenge, they hope to host their third Micronesia Challenge Summer Camp. One of the goals this year, in addition to introducing students to environmental careers and issues, is to partner with Marianas Dive to teach some young locals how to SCUBA dive.

The Micronesia Challenge seeks "to effectively conserve 30 percent of our near shore resources and 20 percent of our terrestrial resources by 2020." The Challenge was signed in 2005 by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial along with the leaders of Palau, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands.

The Parks & Trails Committee will have a meeting on Thursday, Feb. 7 at 10am at the Marianas RC&D office in Garapan. Other meetings will be listed on the Beautify CNMI website at www.beautifycnmi.com when they are scheduled.

People interested in getting involved with Beautify CNMI can call the PTI sponsored Beautify CNMI volunteer line at 285-6462.

Angelo Villagomez is the executive director of MINA.

CONSERVATION WORKSHOP JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Instructors from the Nature Conservancy and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration join participants from different CNMI resource agencies such as Division of Fish and Wildlife, Coral Resource Management Office and Division of Environmental Quality during the Conservation Action Planning workshop at the Pacific Islands Club yesterday.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MHS Class of '83 committee meeting today

The MHS Class of 1983 Reunion Planning Committee is inviting all graduates to come and join us with our monthly meeting today, Jan. 18, 2008,at 7pm, at the Kili Beach Pavilion (1st Pavilion). We will be meeting more often in the next few months just so we can finalize everything before the big day! A big thank you to the many classmates who have made the effort to help us in the planning stages.

You may contact any of the Steering Committee members for details: Tonnie Camacho at 483-9665, Viola Kaipat at 483-0214, Ed Camacho at 483-5262, Jane Tudela at 234-9571, Frances Mildred Cruz at 483-0995, Ester Teregeyo at 285-6285, Ben Sablan at 287-1480, Diego Songsong at 287-4300. ***(PR)***

KHS report card day today

Attention to all parents and guardians of Kagman High School students: The school's second quarter report card issuance is scheduled today, Jan. 18, 2008, from 3:30pm to 5:30pm in the school cafeteria. Teachers will be available in the cafeteria to meet with parents and guardians. For more information, call 237-3840 or 237-3832. ***(PR)***

SSHS PTA meeting

To all parents/legal guardian of Saipan Southern High School, there will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 23, 2008 at 6pm in the cafeteria. ***(PR)***

San Antonio Bingo Spectacular

The San Antonio Parish Council will be hosting a "Bingo Spectacular" fundraising event this Sunday, Jan. 20, 2008, from 1pm until around 5pm. This event will be held at the San Antonio Parish Social Hall.

Tickets for Bingo Spectacular are on sale at the Parish Office for $20 each. About $1,000 cash prizes will be given away and plenty of other door prizes are up for grabs. Come one come all.

MHS calendar of events

Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
For questions and concerns contact 237-3206. (PR)

Hopwood Junior High events

Jan. 21, Dr. Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
Feb. 4-5, School-level Professional Development Days (no classes)

NMC's updated Spring dates

Qualify for an application and placement test fee waiver by enrolling for the Spring Semester at the Northern Marianas College (a savings of more than $75). Applications are currently being accepted through the Office of Admissions and Records. Here are some key dates to remember:

English Placement Test, Jan. 18, 2008, 1pm-4pm, Rm. A-9

OPEN Registration, Jan. 15-18, 2008, 9am-6pm

LATE Registration, Jan. 19, 2008, 9am-12pm

First Day of Instruction, Jan. 22, 2008

Last Day of Instruction, May 10, 2008

Applicants can visit the OAR Office or call 234-5498 extensions 1523 or 1540 for more information. ***(NMC)***

WSR Elementary January events

Jan. 18, 2nd Quarter Awards Ceremony
Jan. 19, Saturday Reading Program, 8am to 10am/10am to 12pm (breakfast and lunch provided)
Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
Jan. 22, STUCO meeting, 2:30pm, Room D-5
Jan. 23, Nov/Dec/Jan Diners Club (2nd and 3rd grade in charge), Pizza Night fundraising
Jan. 26, NJHS Induction Ceremony (details TBA later)
Saturday Reading Program, 8am to 10am/10am to 12pm (breakfast and lunch provided)
Jan. 29, Spelling Bee finals, 2:30pm, WSR cafeteria
Jan. 30, Half-day (Teacher Professional Development Day

The WSR Library will be open from 9am to 4pm from Jan. 2 to Jan. 9. Students and parents are encouraged to come to the library and borrow books and use the resources. ***(PR)***

Peaceful Motorcade Rally Against Federalization without Representation

Sunday, January 20, 2008

Garapan Fishing Base, across Kristo Rai Church, 10:00 AM staging and 11:00 AM rally

B-B-Q and Potlock Luncheon will follow right after Motorcade.

The TAOTAO TANO Organization invites all Citizens of the Commonwealth to unite as one and join together in democratic opposition to Federalization without Representation and Federalization without an economic impact study. Chamorros, Carolinians, Caucasians—people from every race and from all walks of life—are welcome to join us.

Matsumura is new PDI president, 4 promoted

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Longtime Pacific Development Inc. general manager Yoichi Matsumura replaced Joji Kawaguchi as president of the Kinki Nippon Tourist Company subsidiary effective Jan. 1. 2008.

Upon his designation as the president of Team PDI, Matsumura also promoted four longtime employees to new positions.

Erstwhile sales and marketing manager Masanori Takahashi and former public relations manager Gordon Marciano were elevated to the positions of assistant general managers.

Tour operations manager Katsuko Takahashi and operations manager Mario K. Espeleta, meanwhile, were promoted to executive assistant to the president and assistant corporate secretary, respectively.

Under their new assignments, Matsumura said that Masanori Takahashi and Marciano will assist him in expanding the company's business opportunities in the CNMI, while Katsuko Takahashi and Espeleta will be tasked with the daily operations.

"Team PDI will continue to provide quality service and warm hospitality for the tourists and local community with our newly reorganized management team," said Matsumura. "Our spirit stands for better alternative and creative challenge.

Founded in November 1974, PDI is a pioneer in the tourism industry, and has become one of the major tour operators here in the CNMI. As a subsidiary of Kinki Nippon Tourist Company and Group of Companies of Japan, PDI believes and continues to advocate a suitable place for relaxation for visiting tourists and accommodate local services as well.

PDI has a wide range of services, with substantial tour operations and ground-sea transfers, inbound, and outbound operations, various optional tours and sales. In addition, PDI has installed Hafadai Pleasure station with marine sports activities, and more indigenous oriented operation of Chamolinian Cultural Village, a venue for exchange of traditional cultures and heritage, and customs taught by qualified instructors.

Pula, Fernandez take up NMC's advancement

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Office of Insular Affairs director Nikolao Pula, third from left, poses with, from left, OIA field representative Jeff Schorr, Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, Compass dean Tee Abraham, OIA Budget Division director Tom Bussanich, and Raaj Kurapati, NMC chief financial and administrative officer.

Newly appointed Office of Insular Affairs director Nikolao Pula recently met Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez to continue their ongoing dialogue about the college's progress and efforts to secure federal aid.

"Despite his demanding schedule while he was on island, Mr. Pula made time to visit the NMC campus so we can discuss many pressing issues that involve his office," said Fernandez. "His visit illustrates the high priority he attributes to our students and the role our institution plays in the CNMI's economic and social growth."

Central to their discussion was NMC's submission of an Operations and Maintenance Improvement Project grant application, which requests funding for an upgrade to NMC network hardware. The application also seeks financial support for specialized network training for IT staff and students.

"Upgrading NMC's information technology infrastructure is critical to the advancement of our students and, ultimately, the CNMI's local workforce," Fernandez added. "The Office of Insular Affairs has been very responsive to our application, and Mr. Pula has assured us that his staff will review our application in the soonest possible time."

Tom Bussanich, OIA director of Budget Division and Jeff Schorr, OIA field representative, were also present in the meeting, as well as NMC's Raaj Kurapati, chief financial and administrative officer, and Tee Abraham, dean of Compass.

Fernandez's meeting with Pula follows other discussions the two have had, including one during the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting in American Samoa. ***(NMC)***

'Schools have become surrogate parents'

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
Rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI State Board of Education member Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero said that "schools have become surrogate parents for much of the community" and urged parents to be more involved in the education of their children.

Guerrero

During Monday's inauguration of the new BOE members, Deleon Guerrero said he applauds the efforts of the Parents & Teachers Associations for providing much needed assistance and policies and input to the schools. However "they [PTAs] cannot do they everything on their own."

"It is all too common that when report card night comes, less than 1 percent of the parents show up," he said.

He emphasized that parents should always remember that they are the primary educators. "All parents must take an active interest and active role not only in their schools but most especially in their children's education."

A number of people in the audience nodded their heads in agreement when he said: "Our schools cannot and should not take your place."

According to Deleon Guerrero, research has shown that when parents work hand-in-hand with their child's school, the child succeeds.

"It is time for all our students to succeed and it is time for all parents to fulfill their roles as primary educators," he said.

Deleon Guerrero is also calling on all students to do the same thing. "Students must remember that this is not a passive spectator sport where your teacher does all the work to teach you. In fact, I would argue that it is not about teaching; it's about learning. And that requires that you do your part as well."

Deleon Guerrero said he is calling on student leaders and the CNMI Youth Congress to "step up and do more."

"Critics have every right to question the legitimacy of funding a Youth Congress that does nothing. I challenge the current Youth COngress to prove those critics wrong," Deleon Guerrero said.

"Can you imagine come budget time how powerful it would be if the Youth Congress senators storm the hallways of the CNMI Legislature? The youth have power; it's time to make good use of it," said Deleon Guerrero.

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Island Snapshots

INAUGURAL SESSION

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

House speaker Arnold I. Palacios and Rep. David M. Apatang recite the oath of office during the inaugural session for the 16th Legislature on Monday, Jan. 14, 2008, at the House of Representatives chamber on Capital Hill.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

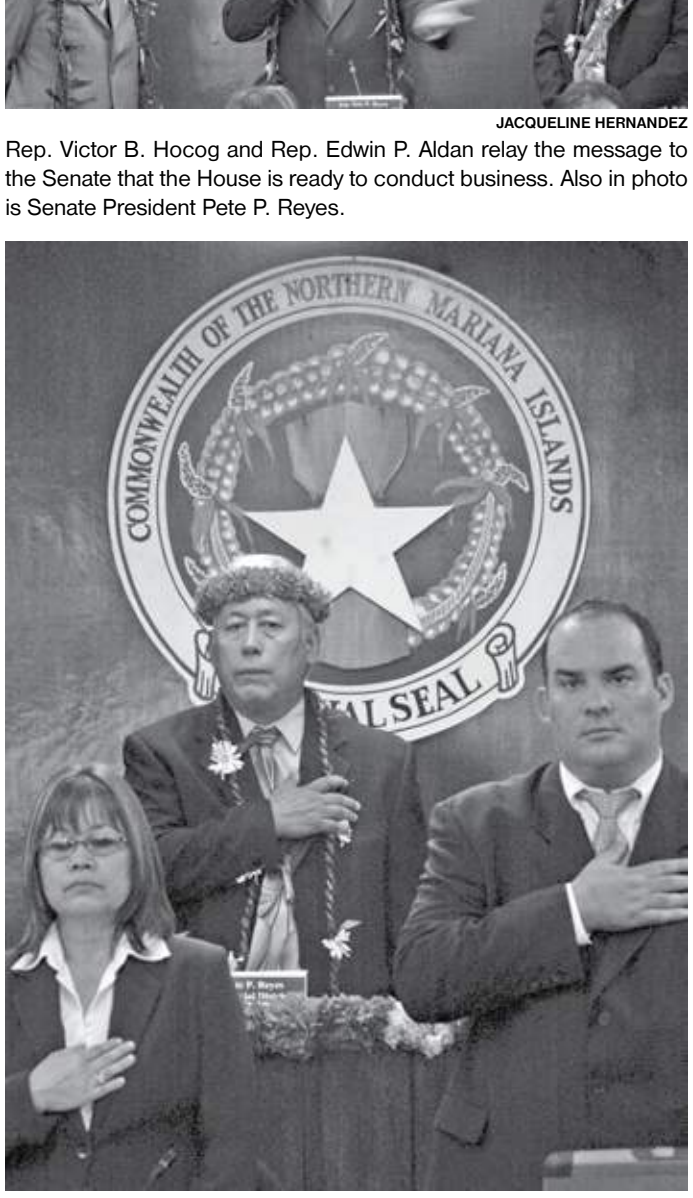
Rep. Rosemond B. Santos, Rep. Joseph C. Reyes and Rep. Diego T. Benavente are shown taking their oaths of office.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Victor B. Hocog and Rep. Edwin P. Aldan relay the message to the Senate that the House is ready to conduct business. Also in photo is Senate President Pete P. Reyes.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of the 16th House of Representatives gather inside the House chamber for the inaugural session.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senate President Pete P. Reyes, Senate clerk Doris Burmudez and Senate legal counsel Michael Ernest sing the U.S. and CNMI national anthems.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senate President Pete P. Reyes and members of the 16th Senate raise their right hands as they recite their oath of office.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Christina-Marie E. Sablan and Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider during the inaugural session at the House of Representatives.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Rosemond B. Santos delivers her remarks while Rep. Raymond D. Palacios listens.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios leads the 16th Legislature's inaugural session.

Rep. Ralph Anthony DLG. Torres, Rep. Edward T. Salas, Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb, Rep. Edwin P. Aldan and Rep. Christina-Marie E. Sablan share a light moment during the inaugural session.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

DIABETIC EYE CLINIC JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The staff of Marianas Eye Institute gather for a group photo during the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care in Beach Road Garapan Friday last week.

PTC PROMO WINNER CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Trading Co. general manager Charles Cepeda, left, and PTC staff Donna, right, flank Julie Camacho, the winner of the Miller Lite Choose your bike promo during the final drawing held at Joe's Bar and Grill on Jan. 11, 2008. Camacho won for herself a Yamaha Cruiser V Star Classic.

PLAY TIME JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Korean tourists spend their afternoon yesterday playing in the swimming pool of the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio. According to MVA the CNMI is projected to welcome 468,286 tourists in 2008.

Two of Marianas Eye Institute's staff give a demonstration of their state-of-the-art facility during the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Center for Advanced Diabetic Eye Care in Beach Road Garapan Friday last week.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

BIRTHDAY BOY

Birthday greetings go out Lester Lapuz, who is celebrating his 13th birthday today, Jan 18, 2008. Wishing you all the happiness that life has to offer. Greetings come from your family and friends.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PASSING TIME

Tourists spend their time reading while waiting to board a plane inside the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

WARM RECEPTION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Korean Association of Saipan provided a welcome reception to two honorary members, Korean-American attorneys Janet Han King and Teresa Kim on Monday, Jan. 14. King is an assistant public defender at the CNMI Office of the Public Defender. Kim is the legal counsel of Lt. Gov. Timothy Villagomez. Also pictured are: Park Jun Soo (seated), Korean Association of Saipan president, and Jonathan Joo (standing), Korean Association of Saipan Secretary General.

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Saipan firefighter Norman Skilling and Tinian firefighter Ian Cruz demonstrate the proper way of locking the child seat during the Child Passenger Safety Technician's Class at the Aqua Resort Club Wednesday afternoon. The workshop was facilitated by retired CHP officer Peggy Howard from California, Highway Patrol Sgt. Michael Hannessey from California, Occupant pPotection coordinator Arnulfo Cuellar from Arizona and Injury Prevention manager Tomi St. Mars from Arizona.

APPRECIATION DINNER JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Tina Sablan gives her remarks during an appreciation dinner hosted by the Unity group for Sablan at the Aqua Resort Club Saturday night, just two days before she was sworn into office as a lawmaker.

Pacific

Ailing A. Samoa governor flown to Hawaii

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—American Samoa's Governor Togiola Tulafono is to be airlifted to Honolulu this morning on a military aircraft for medical treatment.

The governor had his appendix removed on January 6th and was hospitalised for over a week.

Our correspondent in American Samoa, Monica Miller says Togiola was recovering but experienced stomach pains and had another operation three days ago.

She says that while the Governor wanted to be treated locally, the Lieutenant Governor Ipulasi Aitosele Sunia was concerned for his health.

"As a precautionary measure, the Lieutenant Governor has decided that it is best to medivac the Governor to Honolulu to have him checked by doctors there. I do not believe that it is an emergency and that the Governor is in any danger. They're just wanting a second opinion and having him looked at by doctors in Honolulu. He's been in good health and I don't believe that he has suffered any major illnesses."

Cook Islands name Kiwi as foreign minister

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International/PIR) —The Cook Islands government has appointed New Zealander Mike Mitchell as its new Foreign Secretary.

Mr Mitchell has been in the country for many years and runs a private law practice on Rarotonga.

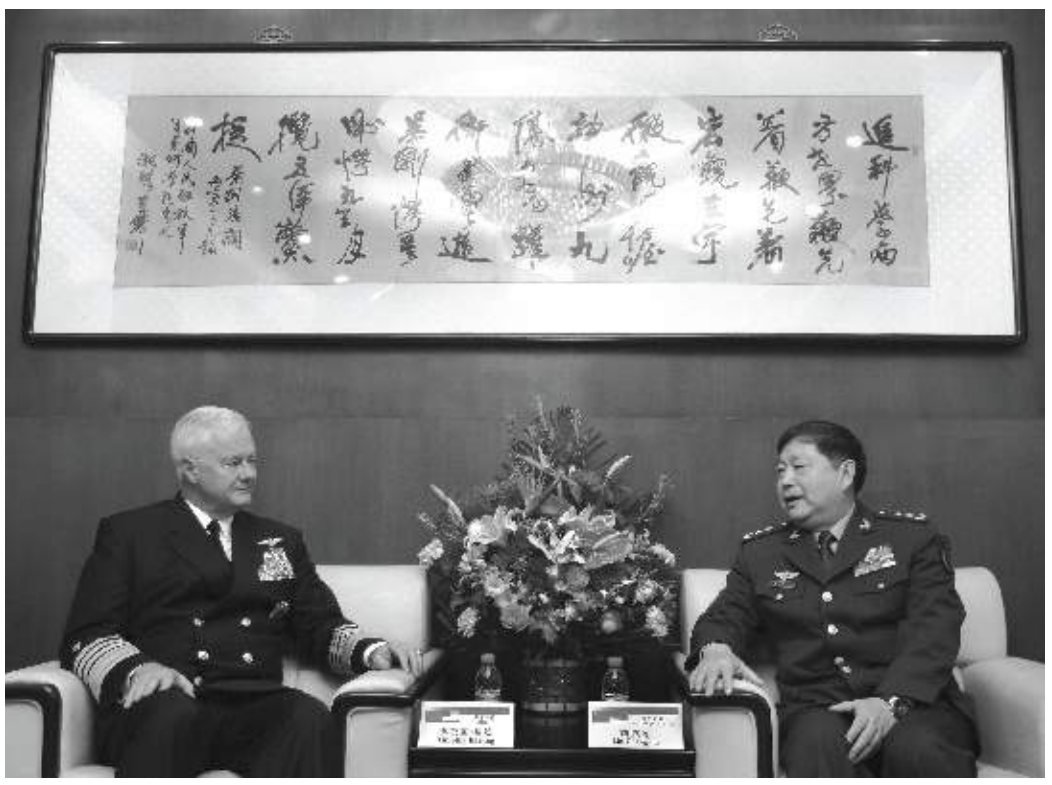
Mr Mitchell takes over from Edwin Pittman.

Mr Mitchell is currently the Cook Islands Solicitor General was appointed by the government to the key position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ahead of four applicants yesterday.

Mr Mitchell says while he's feeling a bit daunted, he has identified the top three priorities.

"Our number one consideration is New Zealand because we have a constitutional arrangement that affects foreign affairs; the second category of persons or places is the pacific region and thirdly further afield which in our case mainly involves Brussels and the EU."

The Cook Islands is currently the chair of the African, Caribbean Pacific group or ACP.



CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY

AP

U.S. commander in the Pacific, Adm. Timothy Keating, left, meets with Chinese Air Force Lt. General Liu Chengjun at the Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008. Keating said Tuesday that China needs to be more open about its military plans, citing its denial of a port call for U.S. ships in Hong Kong as an example of its lack of transparency.

Fiji's Air Pacific cautions against 'open skies'

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive/PIR)—Fiji's flag carrier Air Pacific CEO John Campbell says the country may lose out if the interim Government carries out plans to deregulate the aviation industry.

Campbell said Air Pacific is currently developing a study of deregulation and open skies for discussion with the relevant ministries.

Campbell was responding to questions following revelations by the interim Minister of Finance Mahendra Chaudhry last week that Government is considering opening up Fiji's aviation industry.

However, Campbell says there is a great deal of misunderstanding about what these phrases actually mean so "there needs to be a full and informed discussion to reach a policy decision."

He pointed out that currently Fiji has 25 Air Service Agreements in existence and only eleven are utilized by Air Pacific and/or foreign carriers.

"Fiji places no barrier to the execution of further Air Service Agreements with other countries should their airlines wish to fly here, therefore there is no constraint on services being granted to foreign airlines," he added.

Moreover, he says the fact is that Fiji is essentially a low fare vacation destination generating very limited levels of high value business travel and limited quantities of primarily low freight value, perishable product cargo moving in and out of the country.

"This makes the economics of operations to Fiji very challenging and the majority of airlines obviously believe services will be loss making and accordingly do not initiate flights."

"Changing the regulatory environment will not change the economics of operations... therefore we are unlikely to see a flood of airlines commencing operations in the event of regulatory change."

As an example, he points to Fiji's close neighbors such as Niue, Western Samoa and Tonga that have all declared open skies policies but no additional airlines operate because of the economic considerations.

Remittances to Fiji drop nearly 30 percent in September

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times/PIR)—Money remitted by Fijians working overseas hit $120.3 million in September last year a drop of almost 30 percent when compared to the $170.8 million for the same period in 2006.

Reserve Bank of Fiji acting deputy Governor Barry Whiteside said reasons for the decline could not be ascertained by the central bank.

"Remittance have grown significantly in the past few years, rising from $32 million in 1999 to $209 million in 2006," said Whiteside.

"This surge in inflows has helped Fiji's balance of payments position, especially as the rising trends occurred during a period when exports were generally flat (with growth in imports substantial)."

"In 2007, however, we have seen a decline from 2006 levels."

"Latest figures show that cumulative to September 2007, remittance received through the formal channel was around $183.7 million, a decline of around 30 percent, when compared to $260.7 million recorded in the same period in 2006." Whiteside said remittance, like other services inflows, were volatile and sensitive in nature to a number of factors, such as global economic conditions.

He said the RBF could not explicitly ascertain the reasons for the decline in remittance last year.

He said the RBF collated and published data on a regular basis through the formal channel.

That, Whiteside said, was based on reports from commercial banks and authorized foreign exchange dealers.

"However, it is important to note that the personal remittance inflows through informal channels may be significant, similar to the experiences of other developing countries," he said. He said the latest figures were available to September of last year.

The Bureau of Statistics last December quoted provisional figures of FJ$210.4 million as tourism earnings for the third quarter last year. This, the bureau said, was a decline of FJ$10.5 million or 4.8 percent when compared to FJ$220.9 million for the same period last year.

In its economic review at the end of October last year, the RBF said production in the sugar industry declined by almost 10 percent cumulative to September with the recent drought expected to affect the 2007 and 2008 crops.

Attempts to get comments from interim Finance Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and ousted Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase were unsuccessful.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Armed thugs terrorize Bougainville villagers

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—Villagers from the Hagogohe area on east coast of Buka are afraid of going to their gardens and hunting grounds which have been taken over by armed thugs. According to reports reaching the Post-Courier last week, 10 masked men armed with bush knives held up a Poposoko village woman who was working in her garden and stole vegetables from her farm. The men also beheaded the woman's dog and carried the animal away to be roasted and later eaten. The armed men are believed to be prison escapees from the Solos area of the Peit Constituency. The gang members have also built a camp in the Poposoko people's hunting grounds and are forcing hunters to surrender their catch to them.

Storm brewing west of Vanuatu, moving east

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—Parts of Fiji's north are under water, after a tropical storm passed through the area. Two tropical depressions have been active in the region, bringing with them heavy rains, strong winds and storm conditions. Senior Meteorologist at the Nadi Weather Office, Daini Tupou Donu, told Radio Australia one storm is currently to the East of Fiji and could cause further flooding in Labasa. Meanwhile, a new depression has formed to the West of Vanuatu and is expected to develop into a cyclone in the next two days.

Internet comes to Solomons' Marovo lagoon

HONIARA, Solomon Islands x (Solomon Times/PIR)—Who would have thought that one could one day access the Internet in the comfort of custom built leaf huts overlooking the beautiful Marovo lagoon? The rural connectivity program, spearheaded by the People First Network and supported by the European Union and Japan, has been able to do just that. The Rural Training Centre and community of Batuna village, Marovo Lagoon, have been connected to the Internet and the World Wide Web. A 25-kilometre wireless link between Batuna and Bekabeka Distance Learning Centre, which has a broadband connection via a satellite, enabled villagers to have high speed internet access. The link has been established to extend the educational use of the Internet including the provision of distance learning, in line with the Ministry of Educations programs financed by the European Union.

Solomons opposition shrinks as two more defect

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Star/PIR)—In a major blow to the Opposition, two of its members are joining the government. Member of Parliament for West Are'are Severino Nuaiasi and his North West Guadalcanal colleague Siriako Usa tendered their resignations yesterday. Their resignation now leaves the Opposition and Independent combined to only 10 members of parliament of the 48-member house. Nuaiasi confirmed his resignation yesterday to Solomon Star. He said he has now teamed up with the Dr Derek Sikua government. Nuaiasi was a former agriculture minister, whilst Usa held the mines and energy position.

Twelve arrested in PNG crackdown on illegal aliens

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (PNG Post-Courier/PIR)—Twelve foreigners were arrested in Kundiawa on Monday for breaching immigration laws as the PNG Government and police cracks the whip on illegal immigrants. Immigration officers from Port Moresby and Mt Hagen police conducted the joint operation in Kundiawa, Chimbu Province. The 12—two women and 10 men aged between 25 and 42—are from Fujian Province, China. Six of them were charged by Mt Hagen police with having made false declarations to obtain entry permits, five with illegally entering and residing in the country and one with harboring illegal immigrants. They have been locked up at the Mt Hagen police cell and will appear before the Mt Hagen District Court for mention today.

Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
5,851.900
Down 18.900
(-0.32%)

HONG KONG
24,341.41
Down 109.44
(-0.45%)

JAKARTA
2,575.3379
Down 16.973
(-0.65%)

TOKYO
13,558.74
Up 54.23
(+0.40%)

K. LUMPUR
1,516.22
Up 24.56
(+1.65%)

MANILA
3,248.46
Down 103.20
(-3.08%)

SINGAPORE
3,344.53
Up 3,344.53
(+0.00%)

SEOUL
1,691.89
Down 13.08
(-0.77%)

BANGKOK
777.29
Up 3.49
(+0.45%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
12,466.16
-34.95

NASDAQ
2,394.59
-23.00

S&P
1,373.20
-7.75

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.1357
British Pound	0.5091
Canadian Dollar	1.024
Chinese Renmbi	7.2513
Euro	0.6821
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8028
Indian Rupee	39.295
Indonesian Rupiah	9448
Japanese Yen	107.143
Malaysian Ringgit	3.2775
New Zealand Dollar	1.3002
Philippine Peso	41.025
Singapore Dollar	1.4324
South Korean Won	946.85
Swiss Franc	1.0995
Taiwan Dollar	32.3
Thailand Baht	30.005

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Bank offers $50K college scholarships

HAGATNA, Guam—For the fifth consecutive year, the Bank of Guam is offering local high school seniors an opportunity to apply for up to $5,000 in grants through its participation with the 2008 Education Exchange College Grant Program.

Totaling $50,000 in grants for 2008, the Education Exchange Program is open to all college-bound, high school seniors graduating this year. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and able to provide written acceptance to an accredited 4-year college by May 15, 2008. Other information includes an official copy of the high -school transcript and two (2) letters of recommendation.

Students must mail their completed applications and supporting documents directly to the ACCEL/Exchange Network in New Jersey. The application package must be postmarked not later than March 15, 2008.

Under the program, a total of four $5,000 grants and 30 $1,000 grants will be awarded by July 2008.

In 2006, three Guam students were awarded a record $7,000. Neeraj Nagarajan, a graduate of John F. Kennedy High School, was awarded $5,000 and attends Princeton University, while Justin Law, a graduate of St. John's School was awarded $1,000 and attends Texas A&M University. Zard Apuya was also awarded $1,000 and is at the University of Guam. The 2004 awardee, Anita Lai from the Academy of Our Lady of Guam, is at Santa Clara University, while the 2005 winner, Patrick Wolff, Jr., a JFK High School graduate is at the University of Pennsylvania.

Applications are available at all Bank of Guam branches. ***(BoG)***

Gas, food spur inflation jump in 2007

WASHINGTON (AP)—Consumer prices rose in 2007 at the fastest pace in 17 years as motorists paid a lot more for gasoline and grocery shoppers paid higher food bills. However, falling prices for clothing and new cars offset some of those gains.

The Labor Department reported that consumer prices rose by 4.1 percent for all of 2007, up sharply from a 2.5 percent increase in 2006. Both energy and food prices jumped by the largest amount since 1990.

Prices were also up sharply for health care, housing and education. However, these gains were offset somewhat by falling prices for clothing, new cars and computers.

Workers' wages failed to keep up with the higher inflation. Average weekly earnings, after adjusting for inflation, dropped by 0.9 percent in 2007, the fourth decline in the past five years. The lagging wage gains are cited as a chief reason many workers have growing anxiety about their economic futures.

Core inflation, which excludes both energy and food, rose 2.4 percent last year, slightly lower than the 2.6 percent increase of 2006. It is the performance of core inflation that the Fed closely monitors.

Analysts said the slight drop in core inflation for 2007 plus various reports showing the economy is in the grips of a serious slowdown will convince the central bank that a key interest rate it controls should be reduced by a bold half-point when Fed officials next meet on Jan. 30-31.

"Price pressures may be a little greater than the Fed would like but with the economy hitting the skids, inflation is not so high to stand in the way of aggressive action," predicted Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisers.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil falls after crude inventories jump

NEW YORK (AP)—Energy futures fell Wednesday, at times dropping below $90 a barrel after the government said crude oil supplies jumped unexpectedly last week. In its weekly inventory report, the Energy Department's Energy Information Administration said crude oil supplies rose by 4.3 million barrels last week, the first increase since the week ended Nov. 9. Analysts surveyed by Dow Jones Newswires on average expected a decline of 300,000 barrels. Light, sweet crude for February delivery fell $1.06 to settle at $90.84 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after falling as low as $89.26 earlier. It was the first time since Dec. 19 the price of crude traded below $90.

Ex-Brocade CEO sentenced to 21 months

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—For two years now, a lingering question surrounding the stock options scandal that triggered criminal charges against at least a dozen executives has been just how severely the courts would punish defendants who are convicted. U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer provided an answer Wednesday, when he sentenced Gregory Reyes, the former chief executive of Brocade Communications Systems Inc., to 21 months in prison and fined him $15 million. Reyes was the first executive to go to trial. It was the harshest penalty yet in a tempest that has rattled corporate America since 2006—and a sign that the courts consider the latest twist on securities fraud an offense deserving of substantial prison time.

Economic concerns weigh on stocks

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street staggered through another volatile session Wednesday, closing mostly lower after a Federal Reserve report showed some economic growth at the end of 2007 and after Intel Corp.'s disappointing profit report. Stocks gave up a modest rally in the final 20 minutes of trading, continuing the fluctuations seen throughout the session as investors pored over corporate profit reports and economic news that supported varying views about the soundness of the economy. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 34.95, or 0.28 percent, to 12,466.16. Broader stock indicators also declined. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 7.75, or 0.56 percent, to 1,373.20, and the Nasdaq composite index finished down 23.00, or 0.95 percent, at 2,394.59.

Somber Fed says economy has lost punch

WASHINGTON (AP)—Retailers, home builders and many manufacturers should brace for even more rough times ahead, a somber Federal Reserve suggested Wednesday amid growing fears that the U.S. might be sliding into recession.

The Fed's snapshot of business conditions showed a national economy losing momentum heading into the new year and a future riddled with uncertainty. The persistent housing slump and harder-to-get credit are making people and businesses ever more cautious, it said.

Separately on Wednesday, more big banks reported losses and said people were having trouble making payments for everything from credit cards to cars. Stocks were mostly down for the day, the Dow Jones industrial average declining 34.95 points, or 0.28 percent.

The Fed report was the unwelcome icing on a recent batch of economic indicators—ranging from a plunge in retail sales to a big jump in unemployment—raising concern that the country is heading for its first recession since 2001.

At the beginning of last year, many economists put the chance of a recession at less than 1-in-3; now an increasing number say 50-50 or even worse. Goldman Sachs, the biggest investment bank on Wall Street, thinks a recession is inevitable this year.

The Fed report said the economy did grow during the survey period—from the middle of November through December—but more slowly than during the late fall.

RIPPLE EFFECT AP

A passer-by walks past an electronic stock board in downtown Tokyo Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008. Japan's stocks fell Wednesday morning, spurred by an overnight dive on Wall Street amid a growing conviction that the U.S. is headed toward a recession. The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index lost 130.70 points, or 0.94 percent, to 13,841.93 points on the Tokyo Stock Exchange at the end of Wednesday's morning session.

Americans pay for housing boom's excess

NEW YORK (AP)—The bill for America's excessive borrowing during the housing boom has arrived, and more people are having trouble paying it.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Wells Fargo & Co., two of the nation's biggest banks, on Wednesday joined a growing chorus warning that the subprime mortgage mess is just the start of a sweeping lending crisis. And some fear that consumers falling behind on all kinds of loan payments could tip the economy's scale toward recession.

Strapped consumers are having a tough time making payments on credit cards, home-equity loans, and even for their cars. This has caused three of the top five U.S. commercial banks that have already reported damaging fourth-quarter results to set aside some $12.5 billion to cover future loan losses—and that number will likely grow as the year wears on.

Problems in the subprime mortgage market are rapidly spilling over into other areas of the economy. No matter what the experts call it—a recession, slowdown or even the makings of a depression—it's clear banks are under mounting pressure to be more cautious about lending.

"If consumption growth stagnates, the odds of a recession are incredibly high," said Andrew Bernard, director of the Center for International Business at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. "All the pieces of household financial health are starting to be shakier, especially at the low end."

He and others are paying close attention to what top U.S. banks say about their customers' payment habits. Many view this as an early indicator about where the overall economy is headed, but there are other signs that are troublesome.

The stock market has had its worst start to the year in three decades, with investors rattled by signs from the Labor Department that unemployment is on the rise and retail sales are on the decline. Further, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday that higher costs for energy and food in 2007 pushed inflation for the year up by the largest amount in 17 years.

Learning to manage up

By LILY GARCIA
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

A reader writes:

"Help—my boss is a monster. She is a complete control freak. She doesn't like to give us assignments until she has gone through them completely and decides they are simple enough. She yells at you if you make a small error and rails on and on about how you will never be able to work on your own. She leaves you out of meetings you would benefit from if you ever wanted to advance your understanding of our work (like planning meetings). I have spoken directly to her about treating us with more respect and saying thank you occasionally. That lasted for a couple days, then status quo. The catch is that we learn a lot at this job despite her. What do I do? And I believe HR and her manager are aware of her bad boss behaviors as she has been sent to a management course and every employee she has ever had has quit. But she is such a hard worker they tolerate anything she does."

A. Even if you think that the powers that be are aware of your boss' shortcomings, it cannot hurt to add your name to the list of the aggrieved. If your boss has previously been sent to management training in response to complaints about her behavior, that is a good sign. It means that the leadership of your organization is listening and willing to act to correct the problem.

When someone is entrenched in controlling and belittling behavior patterns, it may take a while before they change. And even small increments of change can only result from tremendous personal dedication. So my point is that, even under the best of circumstances, you cannot expect lasting changes from your boss on short order.

On the other hand, you can meaningfully support your boss' efforts to improve by providing her with honest observations, as you have, and pointing out the positive impact even of the short-lived changes she makes. This is called managing up, and it is no less critical to the healthy functioning of an organization than the ongoing feedback most employees so long for from their supervisors.

Allow for the possibility that you may never see any drastic improvement in your boss' management style, and that even small changes may be hard-won. Then ask yourself honestly whether the learning you derive from the job is worth tolerating the discomfort of your reporting relationship.

Garcia, whose column regularly appears on WashingtonPost.com, has offered employment law and human resources advice to companies of all sizes for 10 years.

A family business that clicks

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Chris MacAskill, left, with son Don and wife Toni last month at SmugMug's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. The photo-sharing site has seen sales and subscribers grow despite other firms' free offerings.

By JESSICA GUYNN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.—Ever the proud father, Chris MacAskill screens 20-year-old home movies of his sons—Ben singing about a stegosaurus, Mark getting a mohawk—on his laptop.

"This is the negative of working with family members," a red-faced Mark, now 26, says before retreating to his cubicle.

Meet the MacAskills, Silicon Valley's version of the Waltons: seven members of a close-knit clan, ranging in age from 23 to 63, who run SmugMug Inc., which helps families share their own Kodak moments online. They are holding their own against photography services on the Internet run by corporate giants even though they have never taken a dime from outside investors.

They started on a shoestring budget in 2002, not moving into real offices in Mountain View, Calif., until April. Before that, the MacAskills and their employees set up shop in the five-bedroom home of Chris and his wife, Toni. Engineers bunked two to a bedroom. Blow dryers and vacuums routinely blew circuit breakers. Barking yellow Labrador retrievers chased tennis balls up and down the stairs.

Toni, the SmugMug matriarch, referees family squabbles. When things get out of hand she sometimes jokes that she'll send everyone to their rooms for a time out.

The MacAskills deftly blend business and family—a radical concept in the youth-obsessed Internet industry, which admits adults, particularly of the gray-haired variety, only reluctantly.

The company now employs 28 people—all MacAskills, family friends and SmugMug customers they hired—in five countries. The MacAskills have signed up more than 100,000 paying subscribers despite mounting competition from free services, in part by emphasizing their family-friendly approach. They post their own family photos and home videos, spend countless hours chatting up their users in the company's online forum and send lively customer service e-mails.

They also reward customer loyalty. Two years ago, when SmugMug raised its prices, it grandfathered in all its current customers. Every year, SmugMug organizes "shootouts" for its customers: roving expeditions to national parks with expert instruction on how to get the perfect shot.

And once, as payment for photo services, the MacAskills accepted livestock.

That personal touch has won over customers, some of whom traveled from as far away as Boston to attend SmugMug's recent fifth-anniversary party. Others have been so taken with the company that they quit their jobs to work there.

"Google went to great lengths to create a dorm atmosphere," said Don MacAskill, the 30-year-old chief executive and "chief geek." "We work in earnest to create a family atmosphere."

At the head of this Mormon family is Chris, 54, a Stanford-trained geophysicist and lifelong shutterbug. After a stint at Steve Jobs' Next Software Inc. in the 1990s, he caught entrepreneurial fever. With his family pitching in, he built Fatbrain.com, an online bookstore for geeks, and took it public in 1998. Barnesandnoble.com bought the company in 2000 for $62 million. The money was distributed among the many stakeholders, with most of it going to outside investors.

SmugMug employees and customers know Chris as "Baldy," not because his hair is thinning (it is) but because he once shaved it off during a motorcycle ride in Mexico—a trip he took seeking catharsis after he witnessed from a New York board room the collapse of the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

In 2002, Chris became the first to join his son Don, a programming prodigy then working on his seventh start-up, which soon became SmugMug. Together, they recruited Toni, 56, a motorcyclist like her husband. In addition to helping customers and coining the company's name, she handles SmugMug's finances as she did in the early days of Fatbrain. She calls herself the "countess of cash."

Before long, Don's brothers dropped out of college to lend a hand: Ben, now 28, who was going to school to pursue a career in biotechnology, and Mark, who was eight months away from a degree in actuarial science. Ben, the "czar of testing," hunts down software bugs in new features. Mark, the "stats geek," is in charge of figuring out how people use SmugMug's site to improve it and draw more users.

They were followed by their sister. Anne MacAskill Bean, who is 23 and expecting her first child, provides customer support (her specialty is printing) from her home in Columbus, Ohio.

Chris' sister, Robin MacAskill, 63, of Bethesda, Md., telecommutes part-time as a customer service representative.

The MacAskills have found family to be a competitive advantage. SmugMug's revenue has doubled every year, this year reaching $12 million, and the company turns a profit.

The ties that bind families such as the MacAskills can lead to both great fortune and great friction, management experts say. Relatives who go into business together often work selflessly toward a common goal, but family problems can spill over into the workplace.

$ DOLLARS AND SENSE

Paying off holiday debt

By DAVID UFFINGTON
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How did you do with your holiday spending? Did you save up ahead of time and pay all cash? If you used a credit card, did you hold spending to an amount you can pay off in three months?

No?

If you cringed as the spending tab got higher, or are cringing now, take heart. You're not alone.

Here is your Holiday Debt 2007 battle plan:

When the bills come in, open them immediately. You need to know right away what you're facing. Add them all up. Can you reasonably pay off the debt in three months? How about four? Maybe five? Your goal is to plan your payments and stick to it. The interest will keep adding up as long as there is a balance.

Chances are the first post-holiday credit-card statements will offer you a "free" month of no payment due. It's a trick. Don't fall for it. The meter is still running on the interest, and the principle will still be there with the balance rising. Make a payment anyway, hopefully a large one from your plan.

If the holiday spending damage is spread out over multiple credit cards, and if you can't reasonably pay it all off in a few months, attack the one with the highest interest payments. Make hefty payments to all the cards, but push extra money toward the one that's costing you the most in interest.

If you're strapped after the holidays and can't begin to formulate a plan to pay the cards off in a few months, don't be tempted to make only the minimum payments. Those get noted on your credit scores, and they hurt you when your interest rate rises. Pay at least the minimum, and something more. Even $10 added to a minimum payment will keep you out of the dreaded minimum-payment category.

Meanwhile, lock up the credit cards and don't use them until the holiday debt is gone.

More tips:

- Look for extra money: holiday bonus or tax refund.
- Look for areas to cut back and put the extra on the credit cards.
- Sell things. If you got something new and will no longer use the old one, sell it on a free online ad.
- If you know you're in serious trouble, call the credit-card company.

David Uffington regrets that he cannot personally answer reader questions, but will incorporate them into his column whenever possible. Write to him in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to columnreply@gmail.com.

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

FBI: Marine suspect may be in Mexico

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. (AP)—A Marine suspected of killing a pregnant comrade told friends he would flee to Mexico to avoid being convicted of raping her, and investigators said Wednesday they are working with Mexican authorities to track him down. A wide-ranging manhunt for Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean began last week, after authorities said he fled North Carolina and left a note in which he admitted burying the body of Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach, but said she committed suicide. The 20-year-old had accused him of rape. Investigators found Lauterbach's burned remains, and those of her child, in a fire pit in Laurean's backyard and concluded she did not kill herself.

Archbishop pleads guilty to perjury

ATLANTA (AP)—Court officials say the 80-year-old leader of a suburban Atlanta megachurch pleaded guilty Wednesday to a charge he lied under oath. Cobb County Superior Court Judge Frank Cox said Archbishop Earl Paulk of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit at Chapel Hill Harvester Church was sentenced to 10 years probation and a $1,000 fine for the felony charge. Paulk turned himself in to authorities Tuesday night after a warrant was issued for his arrest the previous day. The charges stem from a deposition Paulk gave as part of a civil lawsuit against him, his brother Don and the church by a former church employee who says she was coerced into an affair. In a 2006 deposition for the lawsuit, the archbishop said under oath that the only woman he had ever had sex with outside of his marriage was former church worker Mona Brewer.

2 cops killed in ambush in Georgia

DECATUR, Ga. (AP)—Two off-duty police officers were killed early Wednesday in an apparent ambush at an apartment complex in what residents described as a high-crime neighborhood, police said. Police arrested a 32-year-old man and charged him with murder, said Officer Jonathan Ware, a DeKalb County police spokesman. Authorities were still looking for other suspects, he said. DeKalb County Officers Ricky Bryant Jr., 26, and Eric Barker, 33, were working as security guards at the complex and investigating a suspicious person there when shots rang out, DeKalb County Police Chief Terrell Bolton said. Ware said he did not have details on what led investigators to arrest Herbie Deshawn Durham hours later, other than "hard police work."

Bush exempts Navy from environmental law

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Conservationists on Wednesday blasted President Bush's decision to exempt the Navy from an environmental law so it can continue using high-power sonar in its training off Southern California—a practice they say harms whales and other marine mammals. The president's action by itself won't allow the anti-submarine warfare training to go forward because an injunction is in place, but the Navy believes it will significantly strengthen its argument in court. A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco is expected to make a determination on the future of the Navy exercises on Friday.

Tapes destroyed over CIA's objections

WASHINGTON (AP)—The CIA official who gave the command to destroy interrogation videotapes apparently acted against the direction of his superiors, the top Republican House Intelligence Committee member said Wednesday. "It appears he hadn't gotten authority from anyone," said Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., speaking to reporters after the first day of closed testimony in the committee's investigation. "It appears he got direction to make sure the tapes were not destroyed." Hoekstra said that raises the troubling prospect that there's a thread of unaccountability in the spy culture.

Former Mo. mayor taped begging for mercy

DIAMOND, Mo. (AP)—A small-town mayor and pastor charged with enticing a child over the Internet was recorded calling the investigating detective at home Wednesday and asking him to stop the case. On the tape, Allen Kauffman begs Diamond police Detective Jim Murray for mercy and asks him to make the case go away. Murray played a tape of the phone call for The Associated Press. "Please have mercy on me," Kauffman said on Murray's tape of the call. "I'm begging that I can put my life back together and this don't have to go any farther." Murray responded that there was nothing he could do because the case is now in the hands of prosecutors. Kauffman then asked, "There's no way you can just take the hard drive and not go any farther with it?" Kauffman, reached at home later Wednesday, confirmed to the AP that he had called Murray but denied he was asking the detective to destroy evidence.

GOP ponders deadlocked convention

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Republican presidential race is so unsettled that some party officials are openly talking of a scenario that seemed almost unthinkable until now: the first contested GOP convention in 60 years.

Even if Republicans choose a nominee before they convene in Minneapolis-St. Paul on Sept. 1, there's a good possibility he will emerge weeks or even months after the Democratic nominee is chosen, giving Democrats an advantage in fundraising, organizing and campaigning. Congressional Republicans particularly wanted an early nominee to draw voters' attention from President Bush, whose low approval ratings could hurt the entire party in the fall.

Bush's former top political aide, Karl Rove, told Republican officials Wednesday that major challenges await "the moment our candidate secures the nomination." As if they needed reminding, Rove told those at the Republican National Committee's winter meeting, "the primaries are far from over."

Democrats also face the possibility of a long and costly battle involving Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York and Barack Obama of Illinois and former Sen. John Edwards. But officials attending the RNC meeting said Democrats seem likely to make their choice before a clear winner emerges from the pack of four or five still-credible GOP contenders.

"The way it looks now, it could end up in the convention," Ron Schmidt, South Dakota's Republican National Committeeman, said of the party's nominating process. "It's fascinating if you're a political junkie."

In the major contests so far-Iowa, New Hampshire and Michigan - three different Republicans have finished first. If former Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson scores the win he hopes for in South Carolina on Saturday, he would be the fourth first-place finisher. Likewise, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani could be the fifth winner in the five contests if he proves wise in picking Florida's Jan. 29 primary as his first big stand.

AP

Republican presidential hopeful, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, left, shakes hands before he speaks at a campaign event at North Greenville University in Tigerville, S.C., Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

Ex-lawmaker charged in terror conspiracy

WASHINGTON (AP)—A former congressman and delegate to the United Nations was indicted Wednesday on charges of working for an alleged terrorist fundraising ring that sent more than $130,000 to an al-Qaida supporter who has threatened U.S. and international troops in Afghanistan.

Mark Deli Siljander, a Michigan Republican when he was in the House, was charged with money laundering, conspiracy and obstructing justice for allegedly lying about being hired to lobby senators on behalf of an Islamic charity that authorities said was secretly sending funds to terrorists.

The 42-count indictment, unsealed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., accuses the Islamic American Relief Agency of paying Siljander $50,000 for the lobbying—money that turned out to be stolen from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Siljander

The charges paint "a troubling picture of an American charity organization that engaged in transactions for the benefit of terrorists and conspired with a former United States congressman to convert stolen federal funds into payments for his advocacy," Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Wainstein said.

Siljander, who served in the House from 1981-1987, was appointed by President Reagan to serve as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations for one year in 1987.

Calls to Silander's business in a Washington suburb went unanswered Wednesday. His attorney in Kansas City, James R. Hobbs, said Siljander would plead not guilty to the charges against him.

"Mark Siljander vehemently denies the allegations in the indictment," Hobbs said in a statement. He described Siljander as "internationally recognized for his good faith attempts to bridge the gap between Christian and Muslim communities worldwide" and plugged the ex-congressman's upcoming book on that topic.

Texas is biggest carbon polluter

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Everything's big in Texas—big pickup trucks, big SUVs and the state's big carbon footprint, too. Texans' fondness for large, manly vehicles has helped make the Lone Star State the biggest carbon polluter in the nation.

The headquarters state of America's oil industry spewed 670 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in 2003, enough that Texas would rank seventh in the world if it were its own country, according to the most recent figures from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The amount is more than that of California and Pennsylvania—the second- and third-ranking states—combined.

A multitude of factors contribute to the carbon output, among them: Texas' 19 coal-burning power plants; a heavy concentration of refineries and chemical plants; a lack of mass transit; and a penchant among ranchers and urban cowboys alike for brawny, gas-guzzling trucks—sometimes to haul things, but often just to look Texas tough.

Debbie Howden, an Austin real estate agent, said her family of six has two pickup trucks, three SUVs, and no apologies. "I would definitely put size and safety over the emissions thing," said Howden, 55. She calls their high fuel bills a "necessary evil."

Anthony Nguyen attended the famously liberal University of California at Berkeley but drives a black Nissan Frontier pickup handed down from his dad, a liquor store owner near Houston. Nguyen said his father hauled liquor around in the truck, but he admitted he has no practical use for its large bed.

US to study bizarre medical condition

ATLANTA (AP)—It sounds like a freakish ailment from a horror movie: Sores erupt on your skin, mysterious threads pop out of them, and you feel like tiny bugs are crawling all over you. Some experts believe it's a psychiatric phenomenon, yet hundreds of people say it's a true physical condition. It's called Morgellons, and now the government is about to begin its first medical study of it.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is paying California-based health care giant Kaiser Permanente $338,000 to test and interview patients suffering from Morgellons' bizarre symptoms. The one-year effort will attempt to define the condition and better determine how common it is.

The study will be done in northern California, the source of many of the reports of Morgellons (pronounced mor-GELL-uns). Researchers will begin screening for patients immediately, CDC officials said Wednesday. A Kaiser official expects about 150 to 500 study participants.

Morgellons sufferers describe symptoms that include erupting sores, fatigue, the sensation of bugs crawling over them and - perhaps worst of all - mysterious red, blue or black fibers that sprout from their skin. They've documented their suffering on Web sites.

Some doctors believe the condition is a form of delusional parasitosis, a psychosis in which people believe they are infected with parasites.

In the study, volunteers will get blood tests and skin exams, as well as psychological evaluations, said Dr. Michele Pearson, who leads a CDC task force overseeing the study.

Asia

Islamic militants overrun Pakistani fort

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP)—In an embarrassing battlefield defeat for Pakistan's army, Islamic extremists attacked and seized a small fort near the Afghan border, leaving at least 27 soldiers dead or missing.

The militants did not gain significant ground, but they did further erode confidence in the U.S.-allied government's ability to control the frontier area where the Taliban and al-Qaida flourish.

Attacks on security forces are rising in the volatile tribal region, and Pakistan is reeling from a series of suicide attacks that killed former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and hundreds more, chipping away at President Pervez Musharraf's prestige before Feb. 18 parliamentary elections.

"The militants are now challenging the army openly. They have become very bold and are consolidating their positions," Talat Masood, a retired general who is now a political analyst, said after Tuesday night's attack on Sararogha Fort.

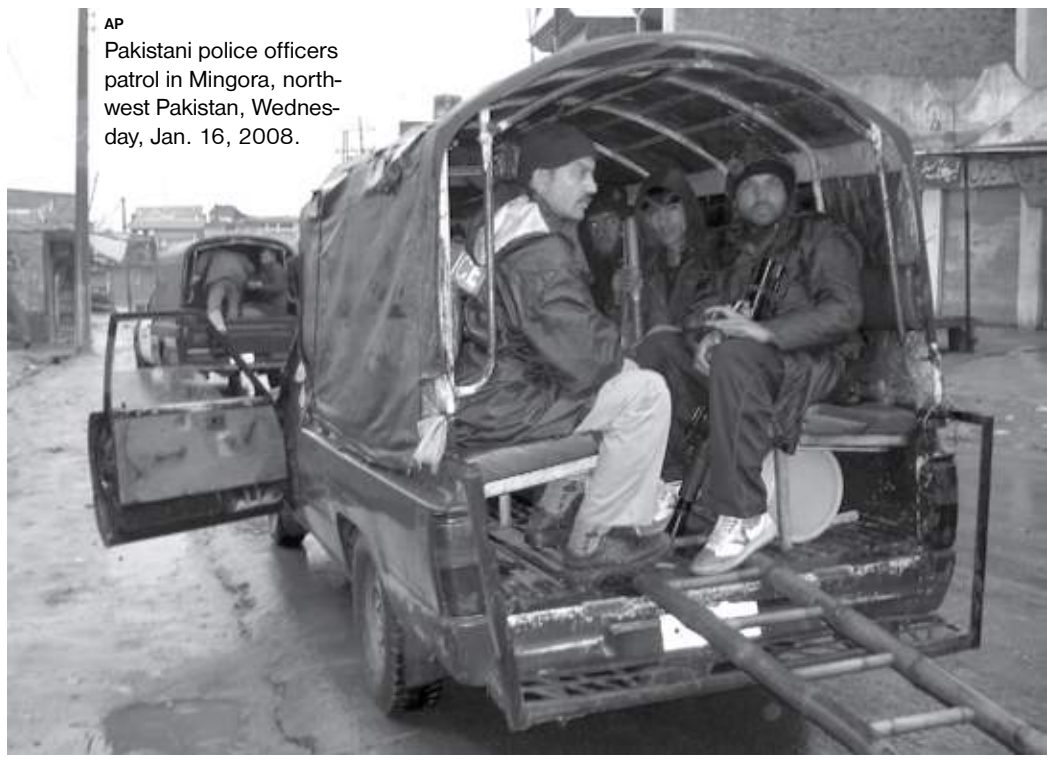
The insurgents who seized the post were said to be followers of Baitullah Mehsud, an Islamic hard-liner who since December has been sole leader of an umbrella group of Taliban sympathizers and who is also thought to have links to al-Qaida.

Musharraf has blamed Mehsud's movement, Tehrik-e-Taliban, for 19 suicide attacks that killed more than 450 people over the last three months. Mehsud, labeled enemy No. 1 by the government, also masterminded the brazen capture of 213 Pakistani soldiers last August.

Fighters of the pro-Taliban groups he leads have terrorized Pakistan's northwest, killing hundreds of soldiers, hunting down politicians, beheading women and burning schools that teach girls anything more than religion.

In the latest battle, insurgents launched a surprise attack on Sararogha Fort in South Waziristan and chased off its small garrison from the Frontier Constabulary, a paramilitary force formed of men from the area.

"About 200 militants charged the fort from four sides," the army spokesman, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, said. "They broke through the fort's wall with rockets."



AP

Pakistani police officers patrol in Mingora, northwest Pakistan, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

Violence kills 31 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lanka's cease-fire deal ended Wednesday in a spasm of violence, as suspected Tamil Tiger rebels bombed a civilian bus, gunned down the fleeing passengers and attacked farmers as they retreated into the bush, killing 31 people.

The attack stoked fears that the official end of the six-year-old truce—largely ignored in recent years—would lead to even worse violence.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa said although Wednesday's violence was timed to coincide with the government's official withdrawal from the cease-fire, it simply mirrored other attacks by the separatist group in recent months.

"This is a brazen demonstration to the whole world of its unchanged commitment to terrorism and the absolute rejection of democracy and all norms of civilized behavior in the pursuit of its unacceptable goal of separation," he said in a statement.

The U.S. Embassy condemned the bus attack, saying "it bears all the hallmarks" of the rebels.

Spokesmen for the rebels could not immediately be reached for comment. But the group, listed as a terror organization by the U.S. and European Union, routinely denies responsibility for such attacks.

The Tamil Tigers have been fighting since 1983 for an independent state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority in the north and east after decades of being marginalized by Sinhalese-dominated governments. The fighting has killed more than 70,000 people.

Senior government officials have vowed to destroy the rebel group by the end of the year, and fighting has raged for months across the front lines along the frontiers of its de facto state in the north.

Machines keeping Suharto alive

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Former Indonesian dictator Suharto's care during his two-week hospitalization has sparked quiet debate in this predominantly Muslim nation.

Doctors said the 86-year-old suffers from multiple organ failure, pneumonia and sepsis, a potentially lethal blood infection.

When Suharto began struggling to breathe last week, his doctors asked Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari if he should be placed on a ventilator, to which she responded "no," let him die naturally—advice the family ignored.

By early Wednesday, Suharto was starting to breathe on his own, prompting doctors to decrease dependence on the machine, said Dr. Mardjo Soebiandono.

When it comes to end-of-life issues in Indonesia, a country that provides no legal guidelines for doctors, religion plays a role.

Islam says all possible steps should be taken to save a dying patient, unless the risks outweigh the benefits, said Dr. Rusdy Malueka, an Islamic ethics specialist.

Malueka was among more than 100 hospital directors, doctors and researchers taking part in an end-of-life workshop in the city of Yogyakarta. The meeting, a collaboration between Harvard Medical School and the University of Gadjah Mada, was organized before Suharto fell ill.

4 nabbed in alleged plot to oust Arroyo

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Four former soldiers and a civilian have been arrested for alleged involvement in a plot to oust Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, police and the suspects' lawyer said Wednesday.

Military intelligence officers and police also seized two M-16 rifles, an AK-47 rifle and ammunition when the men were arrested in suburban Quezon City on Tuesday, said national police chief Avelino Razon. They were charged Wednesday with illegal possession of firearms.

The weapons were to be used "in a destabilization plot against the government," police said in a document submitted at a hearing at the Department of Justice. It did not elaborate on the alleged plan.

At least two of those arrested were previously linked to an alleged failed coup in February 2006 and later discharged without formal charges, said their lawyer, Trixie Angeles. She denied they were involved in anti-government activities.

"These men have nothing to do with anything. They're currently gainfully employed. There is no conspiracy," Angeles said.

Razon said an ongoing army investigation led to the arrest of the five men. He said the alleged plot involved disgruntled active duty and former soldiers with the "possible involvement" of communist rebels.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he has received intelligence information about a plot to be hatched next week to coincide with the anniversary of the 2001 "people power" revolt that installed Arroyo as president.

AP

Police remove the handcuffs on former corporal Redente Maranan, second from left, one of five arrested who are allegedly involved in destabilization plots against the government, as they arrive at the Department of Justice in suburban Manila, Philippines, on Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Cargo ship sinks off Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Rescuers were searching for 10 Filipino crewmen missing after a Taiwanese-owned cargo ship sank off the northern Philippines on Wednesday, coast guard officials said. The Panama-registered MV Ho Feng sank off the northern Batanes island group with 20 crew on board, said coast guard spokesman Lt. Armand Balilo. He said it was unclear what caused it to sink. "Six of the crewmen have been rescued by passing ships, four are still being rescued while 10 remain missing," he said. He said Taiwanese maritime authorities, who were closer to the area, dispatched a helicopter to search for the missing crew. The Philippine coast guard has put a ship and helicopter on standby to help if needed.

At least 20 turtles die in Bangladesh

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP)—At least 20 endangered sea turtles have washed up dead along the southern Bangladesh coast over the last week, an official said Wednesday. The olive ridley turtles—ranging from 90-130 pounds—were found dead on Monday and Tuesday, and more were reportedly found on other parts of the sandy coast, said government conservation official M.A. Hannan. Pollution and the use of illegal nets by fishermen near the shoreline were believed responsible for the deaths in Cox's Bazar district, but conservationists were investigating, he said. Olive ridleys, the smallest of all sea turtles, are endangered. They come ashore during September to March to lay eggs along Bangladesh's coast, Hannan said. Last year, several hundred of the turtles died along the same coast, officials said.

Japan pauses whale hunt during standoff

TOKYO (AP)—Protesters scored a victory in a high-seas campaign to disrupt Japan's whale hunt in the Antarctic, forcing the fleet to a standstill Wednesday while officials scrambled to unload two activists who used a rubber boat to get on board a harpoon vessel. The faceoff was a rapid escalation of the annual contest between the fleet that carries out Japan's controversial whale hunt in southern waters and the environmentalist groups that try to stop it. The founder of the Sea Shepherd anti-whaling group, Paul Watson, told The Associated Press by satellite phone that the Japanese are targeting vulnerable whale stocks and said his organization will keep harassing the fleet. Japanese officials said a Greenpeace boat also was shadowing the whaling fleet.

Taiwan's Ma seen cautious on China ties

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Tensions with rival China should ease if Taiwan elects front-runner Ma Ying-jeou as president in March, though any breakthroughs with Beijing likely would have to wait until at least 2010. Ma's presidential prospects received a boost over the weekend when his opposition Nationalists trounced the ruling Democratic Progressive Party in legislative elections. Opinion polls give Ma a 30-point lead over Frank Hsieh. The United States and China—and Taiwan's powerful business community—hope a newly installed President Ma would offer an alternative to the confrontational stance maintained by the Democratic Progressive Party and open a new era in relations between Taipei and Beijing.

World

Female suicide attack kills 9 Shiites

BAGHDAD (AP)—A female suicide bomber struck black-clad worshippers preparing for Shiite Islam's holiest day, killing at least nine Wednesday in an attack that highlighted insurgents' widening array of tactics against a U.S.-led offensive in key areas on Baghdad's doorstep.

A witness said people shouted slogans against al-Qaida in Iraq as they carried the dead and wounded from the blast scene near a marketplace in Diyala province—a region of farmland and palm groves northeast of Baghdad that holds strategic havens for extremists.

Diyala remains one of Iraq's most violent regions and is a main battleground for U.S. and Iraqi troops trying to overwhelm al-Qaida strongholds in the capital and elsewhere around the country.

Many extremists fled for safer ground before the new offensive began last week, reducing the expected threats from roadside bombs and ambush attacks. But insurgents left behind a more unconventional—but still deadly—landscape of booby traps and tripwire explosives.

The latest bloodshed also came from a new tactic that appears to be developing in Diyala: a woman suicide bomber.

The blast in Khan Bani Saad, a Shiite village nine miles south of Baqouba, was the fourth suicide attack by a woman in Iraq in three months. All have taken place in Diyala.

U.S. officials say this indicates the militants are running short of male volunteers. However, it could also be that al-Qaida in Iraq believes women are less likely to be searched and that explosives are easier to conceal under women's clothing.

In Wednesday's attack, the woman blew herself up about 50 yards from a mosque as Shiite men in black made preparations for a ceremony marking Ashoura, the holiest day in the Shiite religious calendar, according to residents and police.

The explosion took place about 8:30 a.m. near a market as vendors were opening their stalls. Khalaf Ibrahim, 35, said he was walking toward the market to open his cigarette stall when he heard the explosion.

"I rushed with other people to see what happened," he said. "When I arrived, I saw pieces of flesh, two maimed legs, and blood stains on the ground."

"The wounded were screaming for help, and I helped carry the wounded to the police cars waiting to take them to the hospital," he continued. "Some people were shouting anti-al-Qaida slogans as they were carrying the wounded and the dead."

Police and hospital officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were afraid of being attacked, said nine people were killed and six wounded. The U.S. military's figures were seven dead and 15 wounded.

AP

A man injured in a suicide attack lies inside a hospital in Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

Hostage letters recount jungle hell

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—A satchel of letters carried out of the jungle by two women freed by Colombian rebels details the heart-wrenching suffering and depredation of the hostages they left behind.

The letters from eight captive politicians, police officers and soldiers describe being chained by the neck, and suffering from malaria, tropical parasites, heart ailments and diarrhea so severe that one captive couldn't walk.

The testimony of Lt. Col. Luis Mendieta—his first communication to his family in five years—is among the most eloquent and painful in the letters given by the captives to Clara Rojas and Consuelo Gonzalez in a tearful parting after the rebels decided to free the two women.

In a Dec. 21 letter, Mendieta wrote that he is frequently tethered with two fellow captives by chains around their necks. He describes surviving two bouts of malaria, chronic chest pains and being so stricken by tropical ailments that he had to crawl on his hands and knees for about five weeks.

"I had to drag myself through the mud to relieve myself, with only my arms because I couldn't stand up," wrote Mendieta, the highest-ranking Colombian security officer still held.

In four pages of dense handwriting, the 50-year-old Mendieta said he had to be carried on a makeshift stretcher from camp to camp during the ordeal, and lost all his meager possessions.

When he finally was able to walk again, "there was a misunderstanding in the group and someone ordered chains placed around my neck again, tethering me to a stick when I had just begun my convalescence."

His wife, Maria Teresa Mendieta, has done her utmost to publicize the letter's contents despite the pain caused by constantly reading it aloud.

WORLD BRIEFS

Kenya police chief says protesters shot

KISUMU, Kenya (AP)—The police chief in this opposition stronghold said she ordered her officers to fire on a rioting crowd, saying she was forced to because police were overwhelmed during protests over disputed elections. The comments from Grace Kaindi, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, were the first to acknowledge police fired on crowds. Previously, police had denied shooting anyone in the turmoil. "It was an extreme situation and there was no other way to control them," Kaindi said of the Dec. 29 clash in Kisumu. "I gave the order to open fire myself when I heard that my officers were being overwhelmed. If we had not killed them, things would have got very bad." The toll, according to hospital records: 44 shot dead, 143 wounded.

US to set up cluster bomb clearance team

GENEVA (AP)—The United States will create a team of experts to defuse cluster bombs and other explosives that pose a threat to civilians after the end of a conflict, U.S. officials said Wednesday. The proposed "quick reaction force" would be deployed around the world at short notice, a State Department lawyer said. "The force is not stood up yet, but we are in the process of getting it going," Stephen Mathias, who heads the U.S. delegation to the 1980 U.N. Convention on Conventional Weapons, told reporters. The size, budget and other details will be released later, State Department officials said.

New tree species found in Madagascar

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP)—A self-destructing palm tree that flowers once every 100 years and then dies has been discovered on the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar, botanists said Thursday. The name of the giant palm and its remarkable life cycle will be detailed in a study by Kew Gardens scientists in the Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society published Thursday. "It's spectacular. It does not flower for maybe 100 years and when it's like this it can be mistaken for other types of palm," said Mijoro Rakotoarinivo, who works for the London botanical gardens in Madagascar. "But then a large shoot, a bit like an asparagus, grows out of the top of the tree and starts to spread. You get something that looks a bit like a Christmas tree growing out of the top of the palm," he said. The branches of this shoot then become covered in hundreds of tiny white flowers that ooze with nectar, attracting insects and birds.

Britons say Russia harasses officials

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP)—A British cultural organization accused Russian authorities on Wednesday of harassing its staff and said it had temporarily closed its offices in St. Petersburg. The British Council, which acts as the cultural arm of the British Embassy, said the director of its St. Petersburg office was followed and stopped by Russian law enforcement authorities and that intelligence agency officials had interviewed its Russian employees. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband described the Russian actions as an attack on the council. Britain's Foreign Office said Russia's ambassador to London was summoned for talks with British officials. "We've also heard very serious reports of intimidation and harassment of British Council officials," Miliband told reporters outside Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Downing Street office.

3 civilians die in Israeli strike

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli aircraft targeting Palestinian rocket squads on Wednesday killed a 12-year-old boy, his father and uncle in a bungled attack, while Islamic militants, enraged by the death of their leader's son in an Israeli raid, bombarded Israel with rocket and mortar fire.

While Gaza was heating up, a hawkish party pulled out of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government, weakening his political base but potentially freeing him to make greater concessions to the Palestinians.

Two days of violence in Gaza appeared to be uniting Palestinians against Israel at a time when peace talks have resumed for the first time in seven years. On Tuesday, 19 Palestinians were killed, most of them militants, including a son of Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar.

The Palestinian civilians killed Wednesday were victims of an Israeli air attack on a pickup truck east of Gaza City. The Popular Resistance Committees, a Hamas-allied faction, said the apparent target was its chief rocket maker, who was in the area in a similar vehicle at the time.

Maj. Avital Leibovich, an Israeli military spokeswoman, acknowledged that the family's vehicle was "unintentionally hit" and said Israel tries not to harm civilians.

Holocaust survivor learns father's fate

JERUSALEM (AP)—In 1942, 8-year-old Moshe Bar-Yuda walked hand-in-hand with his father to a collection point in his hometown in Slovakia and watched him being shipped off to a Nazi labor camp. The boy never saw him again, and for 66 years was left to wonder about his father's fate.

AP

Holocaust survivor Moshe Ber-Yuda, 74, holds a photo of his father Abraham (Alfred) Kastnersits in Tel-Aviv, Israel, Wednesday Jan. 16, 2008.

Because of a newly opened Nazi archive, the mystery has been resolved.

Bar-Yuda, now 74, was one of the first to obtain Nazi documents now available to the public after they were stashed away for more than 60 years in a secret German archive. Up to now, only limited queries were answered.

The Bad Arolsen documents—transportation lists, Gestapo orders, camp registers, slave labor booklets, death books—contain references to about 17.5 million people, Jews and non-Jews. It is the largest registry of Holocaust victims ever.

The archive showed that Bar-Yuda's father, Alfred Kastner, was killed in a Nazi gas chamber at the Majdanek death camp in Poland on Sept. 7, 1942, less than six months after his son watched him being taken away. Bar-Yuda said despite the tragic ending, he was grateful to finally have some closure and an exact date to recite Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead.

"I don't want to say I feel terrible, and I don't want to say the word 'happy,' but I feel like this open wound has finally been closed," he said. "It closed very sadly but at least it closed."

About 6 million Jews were killed by German Nazis and their collaborators in the Holocaust of World War II.

Off the Wall

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

You're a Packers fan, son. Got it?

PORTAGE, Wis. (AP)—Upset that his 7-year-old son wouldn't wear a Green Bay Packers jersey during the team's playoff victory Saturday, a man restrained the boy for an hour with tape and taped the jersey onto him. Mathew Kowald was cited for disorderly conduct in connection with the incident with his son at their home in Pardeeville, Lt. Wayne Smith of the Columbia County Sheriff's Department said. The 36-year-old Kowald was arrested Monday after his wife told authorities about the incident. Kowald was taken to the county jail and held until Wednesday, when he pleaded no contest, paid a fine of $186 and was released. Kowald's wife filed a restraining order Wednesday, so Kowald will not be able to have contact with his family. The boy refused to wear the jersey Saturday, when the Packers beat the Seattle Seahawks in a playoff game, Smith said.

Twins earn matching perfect ACT scores

BELLEVUE, Neb. (AP)—Brian and Ross DeVol are a perfect match, genetically and academically: The identical twins earned perfect ACT scores. The seniors at suburban Bellevue East High School both scored 36 on the college entrance exam, though Ross DeVol needed three tries. One of his earlier tries netted a 35. The 18-year-old brothers have maintained straight-As through high school, and both are in the running for class valedictorian. "We're pretty competitive," Ross DeVol said. The twins have already won household bragging rights. Their older brother, John, earned a 33 the first time he took the ACT and didn't try again. The brothers are both good in physics and are considering the University of Nebraska or Creighton University in Omaha as their college choices, but they haven't yet decided.

Angora rabbits wander onto Utah highway

IVINS, Utah (AP)—They appeared in the desert as if part of a cuddly, pad-footed mirage. Nobody's quite sure where they came from, but sometime Sunday, 17 lop-eared Angora rabbits—a species not indigenous to the area—wandered onto Utah Highway 91. Local officers took action to save the furry critters from a four-wheeled fate and rounded them up. Then they asked the Ivins animal shelter for help. Robin Kirker, one of the workers who took the animals in, said they appeared to be domesticated but not well cared for. "They're just a mess," she said. "They have been neglected." She said their rabbits' fur was matted with dirt and feces and many had injuries to their ears.

Fleeing father mystifies police

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. (AP)—Police are trying to figure out why a Roosvelt, Long Island man sped away from police in Hempstead, and then jumped out of his car to run—leaving his 2-year-old son in the backseat. Police say the motorist, who was not identified, did not have a record and didn't have any alcohol or drugs on him. The chase began in Hempstead around 6 p.m. Tuesday when a Hempstead police officer tried to pull over the car for a traffic violation. Police say the 27-year-old motorist sped off, but was stopped a short distance away when he had an accident. However, police say the suspect then jumped out of the car and ran, leaving his 2-year-old son in a child protective seat in the back. The boy was not injured.

Sex toy triggers bomb scare in Sweden

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)—A Swedish bomb squad called out to disarm a suspicious package on Wednesday did not find a ticking bomb. But they did find a vibrating sex toy. A janitor alerted police after he found the package in a garage of an apartment building in Goteborg, the country's second-largest city, police spokesman Jan Strannegard said. The package was humming and vibrating suspiciously, so police took no chances and sent out a team of explosives experts. After having cordoned off the area, they opened the package with bomb disposal equipment, only to find the battery-operated device inside.

Man: NY hospital forced rectal exam

NEW YORK (AP)—A construction worker claimed in a lawsuit that when he went to a hospital after being hit on the forehead by a falling wooden beam, emergency room staffers forcibly gave him a rectal examination. Brian Persaud, 38, says in court papers that after he denied a request by NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital emergency room employees to examine his rectum, he was "assaulted, battered and falsely imprisoned." His lawyer, Gerrard M. Marrone, said he and Persaud later learned the exam was one way of determining whether he had suffered spinal damage in the accident. Marrone said his client got eight stitches for a cut over his eyebrow.

Scientists: Extinct rodent weighed a ton

LONDON (AP)—Eeek! Imagine a rodent that weighed a ton and was as big as a bull. Uruguayan scientists say they have uncovered fossil evidence of the biggest species of rodent ever found, one that scurried across wooded areas of South America about 4 million years ago, when the continent was not connected to North America.

A herbivore, the beast may have been a contemporary, and possibly prey, of saber-toothed cats—a prehistoric version of Tom and Jerry.

For those afraid of rodents, forget hopping on a chair. Its huge skull, more than 20 inches long, suggested a beast more than eight feet long and weighing between 1,700 and 3,000 pounds.

Although British newspapers variously described it as a mouse or a rat, researchers say the animal, named Josephoartigasia monesi, actually was more closely related to a guinea pig or porcupine.

"These are totally different from the rats and mice we're accustomed to," said Bruce Patterson, the curator of mammals at the Field Museum in Chicago, adding that it was the biggest rodent he had ever heard of.

An artist's rendering showed a creature that looked like a cross between a hippopotamus and guinea pig.

The fossil was found in 1987 about 65 miles west of the capital of Montevideo, near the vast River Plate estuary—a muddy waterway separating Uruguay from Argentina that empties into the South Atlantic. That area is site of ancient riverbanks and other deposits where fossils have been found, he said.

In this image released in London Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008 by the Royal Society, an artist's illustration shows variations on the head of Josephoartigasia monesi, a newly discovered extinct species of rodent. Uruguayan scientists say they have unearthed fossil evidence of a giant new species of rodent, by far the largest ever discovered.

AP

An Argentine fossil collector identified as Sergio Viera donated the skull to Uruguay's National History and Anthropology Museum nearly two decades ago, said museum director Arturo Toscano.

It spent years hidden away in a box at the museum and was rediscovered by curator Andres Rinderknecht, who enlisted the help of fellow researcher Ernesto Blanco to study it.

Blanco told The Associated Press he was shocked when he first came face to face with the fossil, saying it looked even bigger than a cow skull.

"It's a beautiful piece of nature," he said in an interview. "You feel the power of a very big animal behind this."

Blanco said the skull's shape and the huge incisors left no doubt they were dealing with a rodent, but he cautioned that the estimate of the animal's bulk was imprecise.

The extinct rodent clearly outclassed its nearest rival, the Phoberomys, found in Venezuela and estimated to weigh between 880 and 1,500 pounds.

Blanco said the rodent was far more enormous than any South American rodent alive today, surpassing even the present-day capibara that can weigh up to 110 pounds.

He said the animal's teeth pointed to a diet of aquatic plants.

"From what we can tell, we know it was a herbivore that lived on the shores of rivers or alongside streams in woodland areas," Rinderknecht told the AP. "Possibly it had a behavior similar to other water-faring rodents that exist today, such as beavers, which split their time between land and water."

But he said the rodent appears to have had no tail, adding that follow-up studies are being planned to better determine its diet and other traits.

The creature may have been a contemporary to the saber-toothed cats and giant carnivorous birds that roamed the area millions of years ago, but Blanco said it was not clear whether such predators had the power necessary to bring down the huge beast.

Katrina 'rescued embryo' baby turns 1

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Once a frozen embryo threatened by Hurricane Katrina, little Noah Markham—named for the survivor of the biblical flood-of-all-floods—celebrated his first birthday Wednesday.

His birth—which attracted cameras and reporters within an hour—is still a story his parents find themselves telling frequently.

"My neighbor proclaims it every time we go somewhere: 'Did you see this little baby on the news?'" his mother, Rebekah Markham said.

She and her husband, Glen, a New Orleans police officer, planned a small family gathering Wednesday evening to mark the anniversary of Noah's arrival, which made headlines worldwide.

While Noah's birth may have gotten attention, he's no prima donna, his mother says. His older brother, Witt, has always demanded attention. But "Noah's very happy just watching Witt, or if I give him a toy or even a spoon" to play with, she said.

The boys' embryos were among several created at the same time in 2003, using Rebekah's eggs and Glen's sperm, in a fertility lab not far from their home in Covington, across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans.

AP

Rebekah Markham holds 6-month-old Noah and poses for a photograph at her home in Covington, La., Wednesday, July 11, 2007.

Witt's embryo was implanted immediately in Rebekah Markham's womb, and he was born in 2004. Five other embryos, including Noah's, were among about 1,400 which The Fertility Institute of New Orleans had stored at a hospital that flooded when Hurricane Katrina hit on Aug. 29, 2005.

With power out and the city sweltering in the days after the storm, authorities used flatboats for a water rescue of the canisters holding the embryos.

The one that became Noah was defrosted and implanted into his mother's womb in May 2006. He was among eight babies delivered from 59 frozen embryos implanted that year at the same clinic. Of the clinic's 1,750 frozen embryos, all but 350 were at the hospital that flooded.

Strangers often remark that the little redheads could almost be twins. That lets the Markhams explain that they are, in a way—conceived at the same time, but born 2 1/2 years apart.

Although one defrosted at the same time as Noah's didn't survive overnight, the Markhams still have three embryos frozen. So there's likely to be a third little Markham.

"How can I not? I'm happy with two, but how can you not when you know what the possibility is?" Rebekah Markham said. "We almost lost Noah. I don't want to lose the others voluntarily."

Science & Technology

Touch screens' takeoff appears inspired by iPhone

By MIKE MUSGROVE
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

While Apple and its iPhone were not officially present at the International Consumer Electronics Show last week in Las Vegas, one might say it was possible to feel the company's touch.

When it comes to designing stylish, smarter cellphones, many companies appear to be taking cues from Apple's all-in-one iPhone. The old, button-studded models are out. The action is with smoother slabs of gadgetry that can perform Web functions.

Exhibit A: the LG Voyager cellphone, which sports a finger-sensitive touch screen but can also be folded open so its user can type on the more traditional qwerty-style keyboard. Exhibit B: HTC's Touch, with a screen that lets you scroll through a contacts list with a flick of the thumb.

The iPhone, unveiled a year ago and launched in June, was widely regarded as The Gadget of 2007. Now it appears it has inspired a wave of tributes, as rival cellphone makers move in with devices that appear to be inspired by Apple's creation.

"In 2008, you're going to see a lot of cellphone companies optimizing their devices around touch," said Michael Gartenberg, a tech analyst with Jupiter Research. "If I were cynical, I would say they are copying Apple."

Some of these new phones integrate touch screen enhancements while not bearing an overwhelming resemblance to the iPhone. The Motorola Rokr E8, for example, has on-screen buttons that morph depending on whether the device is being used as a camera, a music player or a phone.

Then there are devices like the mostly button-free, credit-card-sized Samsung phone designed in a partnership with Giorgio Armani. Available in Europe, the phone is a study in shiny glass, framed by black and silver metal, with a lens for snapping pictures—much like the iPhone.

Apple didn't invent touch screens or the idea of a phone-media-player hybrid; phone makers had been trying to build media players into their devices for years. But with the iPhone, the Cupertino, Calif., company was able to win acclaim for its design, which makes it easier for users to zip in and out of the phone's features, such as its calendar and its weather update application.

Apple's success with phones is somewhat like its entry into the digital music business. That technology had been around for years, but when the first iPod launched in 2001, Apple revamped the market, making the technology appealing to the mainstream because its device was sleeker and easier to use than the competition's. The iPod line commands about 70 percent of the market for digital music players.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Touchy-feely on the smartphone front. From left, HTC's Touch, with a screen that lets you scroll through a contacts list with a flick of the thumb, and the LG Voyager cellphone, which sports a finger-sensitive touch screen but can also be folded open for typing on a keyboard.

Toymakers scramble after Scrabulous

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—The companies that make Scrabble are trying to shut down Scrabulous, an online version of the game that is one of the most popular applications on the social networking site Facebook.

Hasbro Inc., which owns the rights to the crossword game in the U.S. and Canada, and El Segundo, Calif.-based Mattel Inc., which owns the rights elsewhere, believe the Facebook game infringes their copyrights and trademarks.

Scrabulous listed more than 600,000 daily active users on Facebook as of Wednesday and is one of the 10 most used applications on the site. People can also play at Scrabulous.com.

The companies jointly issued cease-and-desist notices to four parties involved in the development, hosting and marketing of Scrabulous, according to a letter Pawtucket-based Hasbro is sending consumers who have contacted them about Scrabulous.

In a separate written statement released Wednesday, Hasbro was not specific about who the four parties are, but said it was reviewing a number of options with them and hoped to find an amicable solution.

"If we cannot come to one quickly, we will be forced to close down the site and its associated distribution points," Hasbro said.

Scrabulous' co-developer, Jayant Agarwalla, said in an e-mail that he usually does not comment on legal issues. Facebook did not return several requests for comment.

While there are authorized Scrabble games online, Scrabulous has gained popularity because it's free, easy to play with friends and easy to access on Facebook.

The game was developed by Agarwalla and his brother, Rajat, from Calcutta, India, who say on the Web site that they created it after they couldn't find an online version of Scrabble that they liked.

HELP FILE

By ROB PEGORARO
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Q. Since Firefox updated itself, Password Bank keeps asking me to "confirm following elevation request to remove orphan Password Bank support."

A. This cryptic request began popping up on a Toshiba laptop running Windows Vista after Firefox installed one of that browser's periodic security fixes, then kept repeating itself at each launch of Firefox.

Password Bank is a password-management utility by a California company called UPEK that lets you log into Web sites by swiping the fingerprint scanners on many new Windows laptops. If it worked properly, it could be a major convenience. But in its current state, it's a nuisance that should be uninstalled—not least because Firefox includes its own password manager.

To remove, it, open Vista's Control Panel from the start menu, click the "Uninstall a program" link and then look for "Protector Suite QL 5.6"—right, this program is listed under a different name. You won't see the usual "Uninstall" button atop that window, but double-click Protector Screen's entry anyway. In the next screen, you can click a "Remove" button.

After the uninstall concludes, reboot, and you should be able to run Firefox without interference.

■■■

Q. My computer wakes up from sleep on its own but then does nothing.

A. This time around, the reader beat me to the answer. He found and fixed an obscure setting that caused traffic on his home network to wake up his PC.

To check this, go to the start menu, click "Run ..." and type "devmgmt.msc" (in Windows Vista, type that in the start menu's search box). In the Device Manager screen, click the plus sign next to "Network adapters." Double-click each entry listed there and click its "Power Management" tab. Make sure the checkbox by "Allow this device to bring the computer out of standby" or "Allow this device to wake the computer" is not checked.

Girl next door lands on the Internet

AUBURN, Ala. (AP)—Chances are you'll recognize Alice Fraasa, but you won't be able to figure out from where.

Fraasa, a 19-year-old sophomore at Auburn University, is the face of Snorg Tees, a successful Georgia-based company that sells T-shirts online imprinted with funny, occasionally rude, comments.

Photos of a wide-eyed, laughing Fraasa lure thousands of people daily to Snorg Tees' Internet store, most of them from social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace or other youth-oriented domains where the banner ads are featured.

One click on Alice and potential customers are browsing T-shirts imprinted with phrases like "I'm kind of a big deal" and "Your mom goes to college."

After nearly four years as an anonymous face on the Web, Fraasa is used to getting cock-eyed glances of half recognition, the odd looks of people who vaguely recognize her.

"It always happens," said Fraasa. "I'm a familiar face."

The brothers who launched the company 3 1/2 years ago credit much of its success to Fraasa, who's paid only in free T-shirts.

"There is something about her that draws people in," said Matt Flynn, co-founder with his brother Bryan. They knew Fraasa through her brother.

A few weirdos have tried to contact her, Fraasa said, but mostly she's been flattered by the attention. Fan groups have even sprung up. She has no training as a model. A tomboy who played sports growing up and loves Harry Potter books, Fraasa is a communications major.

"It just seems like I'm the girl next door, like I'd be easy to date, like I'm attainable," she said, flashing the huge grin from the ads.

Flynn isn't sure what's behind Fraasa's clickability, either. But she's got free T-shirts for life if she'll just keep posing.

Panasonic shows long-lived AA battery

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Panasonic is introducing a double-A household battery that will keep gadgets running 20 percent longer than rivals do, so long that Guinness World Records has dubbed it the world's longest-lasting alkaline battery.

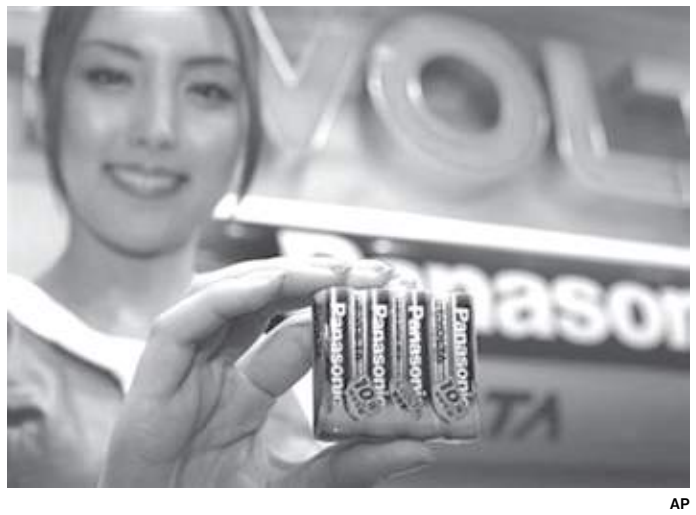
The new Evolta—whose name is derived from "evolution" and "voltage"—has proved its mettle against products from Duracell and Energizer, as well as its own upscale Oxyride batteries, according to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., which makes Panasonic brand products.

Evolta's longer life results from more material being packed inside it, the new materials it's made with and its sturdier seal than predecessors had.

Guinness certified it in Tokyo Tuesday as "the longest-lasting AA alkaline battery cell," based on testing under guidelines set by the industry's International Electrotechnical Commission.

Evolta's 10-year shelf life—up to 60 percent longer than rivals'—also makes it more attractive to store in disaster preparedness kits. Other batteries last five to seven years on the shelf, Panasonic officials said.

Evolta goes on sale in April in Japan, and is planned for overseas markets later this year, Matsushita said. A pack of four will cost about $5.40 in Japan, about 15 percent more than regular batteries and 3 percent more than Oxyride. Prices outside Japan aren't set.



AP

Panasonic's Evolta batteries are shown after being awarded a certification of Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest-lasting AA alkaline battery cell during a press conference in Tokyo in this Jan. 15, 2008 file photo.

Life & Style

Spider-Man's marriage spins apart

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nobody could have seen this celebrity breakup coming: After more than 20 years of marriage, Spider-Man and Mary Jane are kaput.

Joe Quesada, editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics, said it was time to shake things up in the life of Peter Parker, the nerdy New Yorker who upon being bitten by a radioactive spider attained the ability to transform himself into a web-spinning world savior. And it was easier to do that, he said, if Parker wasn't married.

This week's plot twist left many comic-book fans climbing the walls.

"When we first did it, the reaction was, 'How could you do this? This is a terrible thing to do," said Quesada, who invented the story line that turned Spider-Man into Single-Man.

"But with the first issue of 'Brand New Day' (this week's comic book in which Spider-Man returns to single life), our letters very quickly changed to people saying, 'This is fantastic. This is the Spider-Man we remembered. We didn't know what we'd been missing."

With Spider-Man footloose and fancy free again, Quesada says, he'll be able to have new adventures, get into new dilemmas and, who knows, maybe even woo back Mary Jane.

Say what?

Well, the pair didn't exactly get divorced. After Peter Parker's beloved Aunt May was wounded in an attack, Spider-Man and Mary Jane reluctantly struck a deal with the devil-like Mephisto in which he erased everyone's memory of the couple's time together in exchange for May being restored to good health.

The story was received less than warmly by fans who thought that after 21 years of marriage Pete and MJ really were going to make it.

"Considering I have been reading Spider-Man for exactly 20 years now, and that seems to be the amount of time Joe Q. has decided to rip from Spider-Man continuity, can I simply return all of my Spider-Man comics for a full refund?" asked one of the more polite postings on Marvel's Internet message boards after the plot was revealed.

Some message threads were discontinued after they became nothing more than forums to insult Quesada and others.

"It's heresy for some people," laughed Dave Pifer, who runs the Secret Headquarters comic book store in Los Angeles. Others, however, are beginning to adapt.

"The ones who are new to superheroes like Spider-Man, they're excited about it," Pifer said. "They feel like they're starting at the beginning."

One message poster even joked that the beautiful Mary Jane, who remains in the Spider-Man cast, is free now to pursue Brad Pitt.

Stan Lee, who created Spider-Man, isn't involved in the current story but called it "a very creative idea."

"It should stimulate a lot of interest in the characters and the books, and I'm eager to see what happens next," he said.

The 85-year-old comic book legend said it's a challenge to come up with new and interesting dilemmas for beloved characters that have been around for decades.

"You have to introduce new elements to spark interest, to keep it alive. That's the reason we decided years ago to have Peter and MJ get married in the first place," said Lee, who married the couple in a mock ceremony at New York's Shea Stadium in 1987.

"Amazing that they're not even middle-aged yet," he quipped.

AP

This image provided by TM & 2008 Marvel Characters, Inc., shows a copy of the Spiderman comic depicting the super hero's split with his wife, Mary Jane.

Amazon throws contest for new authors

By CANDICE CHOI
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Think you have the next big novel? So do the hundreds of writers vying in a contest at Amazon.com.

The online retailer and some of its most prolific reviewers have picked 836 semifinalists from 5,000 entries to compete for a coveted book deal with Penguin Group, including a $25,000 advance.

Now, Amazon hopes readers will download excerpts of the semifinalist entries and help rate and review them. Penguin editors will consider the comments when picking 10 finalists by March 3. A winner will be announced April 7.

In a secondary raffle, anyone who reviews at least 25 semifinalist excerpts is entered in a contest for an Amazon Kindle, a $2,000 Amazon gift certificate and prizes from Hewlett-Packard Corp.

The contests come just months after Amazon.com launched its on-demand book publishing unit, CreateSpace.

Depending on the success of the winning book, Amazon.com will decide whether to make the contest annual, said Aaron Martin, director of print on demand for Amazon.com.

Amazon.com would not disclose the financial terms of the contest partnership with Penguin, a unit of London-based media giant Pearson PLC. Penguin also does not disclose royalty arrangements.

Amazon.com said company officials and "top reviewers"—customers selected by the company who write a lot of reviews—winnowed down the initial submissions together.

TV networks still have plenty of shows

NEW YORK (AP)—Despite the Hollywood writers' strike, the big TV networks have more than a hundred episodes of scripted series ready to roll out over the next few months. The bad news for viewers: Few are fan favorites.

"Desperate Housewives" is done, the dust barely settled from a tornado that hit Wisteria Lane. "Grey's Anatomy" has no more episodes left, as does Thursday competitor "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." No more laughs are coming from "Two and a Half Men," "30 Rock" and "The Office." "Heroes" is also done.

Several other shows are down to a precious few, the networks carefully rationing new material like a hiker lost in the desert with a half-empty canteen. One of the three remaining "House" episodes, for example, is set aside for maximum impact right after the Super Bowl.

To this point, the two-month strike has had little effect on prime-time television, unless you were really looking forward to the Golden Globes. Most networks already had their lineups set for November, and December is dominated by reruns and holiday shows anyway.

"It's been pretty much business as usual," said Brad Adgate, a research analyst at Horizon Media Inc.

The true test will come in February, a ratings "sweeps" month for which networks have always set aside original episodes of their most popular series, he said.

So far this season, the four networks are down 5 percent in viewers from the previous year, according to Nielsen Media Research. That's about the same rate of decline as last year.

AP

In this image released by ABC, cast members, from left, Teri Hatcher, Nicolette Sheridan, Felicity Huffman and Marcia Cross are shown in a scene from "Desperate Housewives".

BEST SELLERS

Nonfiction

1. ***The Dangerous Book for Boys***, by Conn and Hal Iggulden (HarperCollins: $24.95) Learn how to tie knots, find true north and other essential skills.

2. ***The Daring Book for Girls***, by Andrea J. Buchanan and Miriam Peskowitz (HarperCollins: $24.95) A girls' handbook of skills and must-have knowledge.

3. ***I Am America*** (and so Can You!) by Stephen Colbert (Grand Central: $26.99) "The Colbert Report" star expounds on the forces destroying America.

4. ***Born Standing Up***, by Steve Martin (Scribner: $25) The groundbreaking comedian reflects on his childhood and the evolution of his art.

5. ***The Secret***, by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words: $23.95) Life's secrets distilled from oral tradition, literature, religion and philosophy.

6. ***Boom! Voices of the Sixties***, by Tom Brokaw (Random House: $28.95) Reflections on a decade of social change that swept America and its people.

7. ***Good Dog. Stay.*** by Anna Quindlen (Random House: $14.95) The bittersweet recollections of life with Beau, Quindlen's black Labrador retriever.

8. ***You: Staying Young***, by Michael F. Roizen and Mehmet C. Oz (Free Press: $26) Doctors explain how the body ages and how to counter those effects.

9. ***Become a Better You***, by Joel Osteen (Free Press: $25) The Texas pastor offers advice on prayer, good habits and building better relationships.

10. ***Musicophilia***, by Oliver Sacks (Knopf: $26) The medical storyteller explores the link between music and its myriad effects on the human brain.

Fiction

1. ***T Is for Trespass***, by Sue Grafton (Putnam: $26.95) Kinsey Millhone suspects elder abuse and becomes ensnared in a case of identity theft.

2. ***A Thousand Splendid Suns***, by Khaled Hosseini (Riverhead: $25.95) Two Afghan women struggle to survive jihad, civil war and Taliban tyranny.

3. ***Double Cross***, by James Patterson (Little, Brown: $27.99) Alex Cross is called back to action when a flurry of murders causes terror in Washington, D.C.

4. ***Gentlemen of the Road***, by Michael Chabon (Del Rey: $21.95) An unlikely pair of travelers ply their skills along the Silk Road in the 10th century.

5. ***World Without End***, by Ken Follett (Dutton: $35) Four children who witness a murder jockey for power and position as adults in 14th century England.

6. ***Playing for Pizza***, by John Grisham (Doubleday: $21.95) A down-on-his-luck pro quarterback finds refuge on a football team in Parma, Italy.

7. ***Tree of Smoke***, by Denis Johnson (Farrar, Straus & Giroux: $27) The saga of an undercover CIA agent, beginning with the Tet offensive in Vietnam.

8. ***The Darkest Evening of the Year***, by Dean Koontz (Bantam: $27) A woman who runs a golden retriever rescue group is hiding a dark secret.

9. ***Shadow Music***, by Julie Garwood (Ballantine: $26) An English princess sent to the Scottish Highlands starts a war that inflames ancient passions.

10. ***The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao***, by Junot Diaz (Riverhead: $24.95) A sci-fi-loving nerd and his immigrant family are haunted by the past.

A 'Mighty' act of friendship

By GINA PICCALO
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Nobody crosses a room like Angelina Jolie. She cut a purposeful stride across the polished floor of a Hollywood Roosevelt suite, a feat especially impressive because she was doing it in 4-inch heels and a pencil skirt.

Angelina Jolie was friends with Mariane Pearl before portraying her in "A Mighty Heart."
LOS ANGELES TIMES

It was noon on a warm November day, weeks before Jolie's restrained and moving portrayal of real-life journalist Mariane Pearl in "A Mighty Heart" would land her nominations for Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards. The role reminded audiences of the Oscar-winning actress' formidable talent, telling the wrenching story of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl's 2002 kidnapping—and the race to find him before his killing in Pakistan by Islamic extremists—from the perspective of his pregnant wife.

Jolie had recently returned from the London premiere of her much-hyped nearly nude role in the computer-generated adaptation of "Beowulf," and had just wrapped two high-profile films: "Wanted," a graphic novel adaptation opening in June in which she plays an assassin, and "Changeling," a Clint Eastwood-directed, Brian Grazer-produced period crime drama.

But her most pressing concern at the moment was timing her day's work to end just as her children needed to be picked up from school. Jolie, 32, acknowledged that no matter who you are, wrangling life with four kids (in her case, Maddox, 6; Pax, 4; Zahara, 3; and Shiloh, 1) is no walk in the park. She said she couldn't do it alone.

"I have a great partner in it," she said of Brad Pitt. "I think you need at least to look at that other person and share the lack of sleep and insanity. And then it becomes fun."

On this afternoon, Jolie seemed to have eluded the ever-swarming paparazzi. It was quiet in and around her room except for the chatter of a few vacationers at the pool below. She perched her very thin frame on a sleek white leather sofa with the careful demeanor of a guest.

The conversation turned intimate as Jolie began charting the emotional, sometimes awkward, process of portraying her close friend Mariane Pearl, during the most heartbreaking moments of the journalist's life. It was the toughest role of her career, Jolie said. Pearl's son Adam and Jolie's Maddox were playmates long before a film was in the works. So when Pearl chose her for the role, Jolie was honored and terrified.

"It was the one film I've done where I'd lost sleep and didn't think I could do it," she said.

The film, based on Pearl's 2003 memoir, "A Mighty Heart: The Inside Story of the Al Qaeda Kidnapping of Danny Pearl," was directed by Michael Winterbottom. Focusing largely on the frantic search for Pearl (Dan Futterman), the film was shot mostly in India, documentary-style, with no rehearsals, very long takes and, for the most part, in chronological order. The shoot coincided with an especially difficult time for Jolie. The actress had just given birth to her first biological child and then, shortly after, lost her mother, Marcheline Bertrand, to a 7-year battle with ovarian cancer.

But Jolie was clear that her own loss was mild compared with Pearl's story.

"My thought was, 'My God, (Mariane) went through such unbelievable horror,'" Jolie said. "'I can certainly get myself in gear and pretend on a movie set.'"

To prepare, she reviewed hours of Mariane Pearl's videotaped interviews and radio broadcasts studying her body language and idiosyncratic accent—a blend of Cuban and French that changed slightly according to her moods and her environment. During a series of conversations, Jolie said she tried to get at the heart of Pearl's strength, to understand how she managed such grace in the face of such a horrific loss.

"There are certain things I never asked her," said Jolie. "I never asked her—and I would never ask her—about the tape (of Daniel's beheading). I never have asked her to describe how she responded. I just tried to understand what the loss was and then tried to interpret it from what I understood that was."

As Jolie described her friend—her unwavering political advocacy and commitment to her son, her ability to preserve a private life separate from her public persona—she could have been describing herself. Indeed, the two share much in common. Pearl's mother also died of cancer and Jolie portrayed Pearl's pregnancy and the birth of the couple's first child just weeks after her own first experience with childbirth. Both women devoted themselves to global politics.

"She knows as a journalist, as a Buddhist, as a very strong woman and a mother that to let something eat you up inside doesn't solve the problem," said Jolie. "Her kind of medicine seems to be her advocacy. . . . As much as she had people around her, she's an individual survivor."

She was interrupted by a knock on the door. Lunch had arrived—a platter of cheese, some dark, nutty bread and strawberries. When Jolie answered, the shock of recognition was clear on the waiter's face. He trembled as he set down the tray. Jolie must have noticed but spoke to him without a trace of pretension.

She is among the most famous actresses in the world, but having grown up inside the star machine—her father is actor Jon Voight—weathering a series of very public personal melodramas, she has learned a thing or two about managing her persona. She has no publicist—which in itself is an act of courage in Hollywood—working instead with the same manager she's had since adolescence. And she has preserved a down-to-earth demeanor, offering an unguarded smile and surprisingly firm handshake.

On the set of "A Mighty Heart," Winterbottom said, Jolie tried to bring a sense of camaraderie to the shoot. "Taxi drivers who'd never acted before, people from Britain and Pakistan—she made everyone feel very much a part of the group," he said.

Dede Gardner, president of Pitt's Plan B Entertainment, which produced "A Mighty Heart," said this lack of airs served her portrayal of Mariane Pearl. "There's an honesty to the performance that has to do with who she is as a person, related to who Mariane is as a person," Gardner said. "I like to say they share some DNA. I think they really function similarly in the world. They're two of the only people I've ever met who really truly try to exist in a borderless world and really try to comprehend the globe at large. I think that attitude definitely informed how Mariane handled this tragedy. I think it's how Angie lives as well."

"A Mighty Heart's" critical acclaim didn't help it at the box office—the tragic subject matter proved too dark for summer moviegoers. There was some speculation that it was too soon to revisit those events on screen. But Jolie said she wasn't surprised. It's a story that doesn't lend itself to the theater experience, she said.

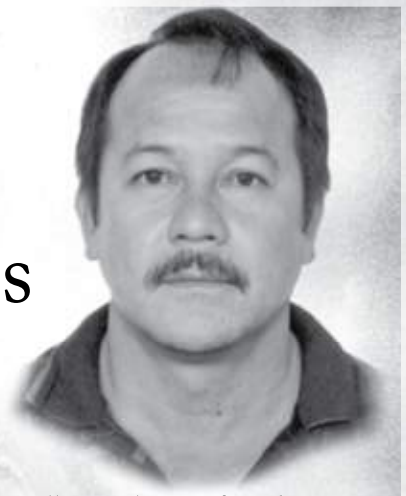
Ultimately, Jolie said her intent in taking on this role had nothing to do with the box office or even her own career. She did it for the Pearls' son, Adam, now 5.

"All I could think about," she said, her eyes welling with tears and her voice wavering slightly, "was I have this one opportunity to show this little boy how much his mother loves his father."

With Heartfelt Gratitude

We, the family of the late

†Manuel Santos Reyes



wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to all our relatives, friends and neighbors for your kind expression of love, sympathy, personal assistance and support during this difficult time of sorrow in the passing of our beloved into caring hands of our Creator.

We extend our special thanks to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, Fr. Nonoy Recaido, Fr. Bong Lopez, Fr. Charlie Borja & Fr. Jessie Reyes and the altar servers of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa who assisted in the Eucharistic Celebration, and to our Techa Lupe Hofschneider, Borja Funeral Home, CHC staff, Department of Commerce, San Roque Church, and NMHC staff, Ms. Marissa Delgado, Senator Pete Reyes, Senator Luis Crisostimo, Congressman Joe Guerrero, Congressman Cynthia Kaipat, Congressman Justo Quitugua, Mr. Ray Mafnas from the Governor's office.

To all who have supported us in one way or another, for your presence at Eucharistic Celebration and Interment. For the many acts of kindness and generosity which gave us the strength and courage to endure our loss – We thank you.

DANGKULO NA SI YU'US MA'ASE.
May God continue to bless us all.

The Family

With Heartfelt Appreciation

We, the family of the late

Juliana Aguon Sanchez

Wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our relatives and friends for their genuine expression of love, sympathy, personal assistance, support, and most importantly your prayers during the nine days mass and rosary for our beloved mother's first death anniversary

Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you always.

May God bless you all

Un Dangkulo na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Oloomway, and Thank you.

From the Family

Judge denounces OJ and doubles his bail

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Hands cuffed at his waist and a defeated expression on his face, O.J. Simpson listened to a judge blister him Wednesday for "arrogance or ignorance or both" for breaking bail terms in a robbery case.

"I don't know, Mr. Simpson, what the heck you were thinking, or maybe that's the problem—you weren't," Clark County District Judge Jackie Glass lectured as she doubled his bail to $250,000.

Simpson had been ordered to have no contact with co-defendants or witnesses after he was freed on bail in September on charges of orchestrating the armed robbery of two sports memorabilia dealers at a hotel room.

Wednesday's brief custody hearing was called because Simpson mentioned co-defendant Clarence "C.J." Stewart while leaving a sputtering, foul-mouthed phone message two months ago for his bail bondsman, Miguel Pereira of You Ring We Spring.

"I just want, want C.J. to know that ... I'm tired of this (expletive)," Simpson said, according to a transcript. "Fed up with (expletives) changing what they told me. All right?"

Though there was no indication Stewart received the message, prosecutor Chris Owens suggested it was threatening.

AP

O.J. Simpson, left, and his lawyer Yale Galanter listen during Simpson's bail revocation hearing in Las Vegas, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008.

The judge merely said she didn't like the tone.

"I don't know if it's just arrogance. I don't know if it's ignorance," she said. "But you've been locked up at the Clark County Detention Center since Friday because of arrogance or ignorance—or both."

Simpson, wearing shackles and a dark jail shirt and pants with orange slippers, grimaced as Glass announced she was doubling his bail. He spoke only when asked if he understood the terms.

"Yes, your honor," the graying football star said evenly.

Simpson, 60, was picked up Friday in Florida by Pereira and brought back to Nevada for violating terms of his release.

His attorney, Yale Galanter, accused Pereira of providing Simpson's bail for the publicity.

"You wanted some notoriety for your company," Galanter said, noting that Pereira had been handing out pens embossed with the name of his company and the words, "O.J.'s way out."

Galanter stipulated during the hearing that Simpson made the call, though he insisted to reporters that Simpson wasn't trying to contact the co-defendant. In court, the lawyer didn't contest the issue.

"I think you need to pick and choose your battles carefully," Galanter said. "I needed to ensure my client would go home."

DEA agents sue over 'American Gangster'

NEW YORK (AP)—A group of retired federal drug enforcement agents sued NBC Universal on Wednesday, saying the movie "American Gangster" falsely portrayed them as villains in the story of a Harlem heroin trafficker.

The suit, filed in federal court in Manhattan, claims that the movie defamed hundreds of DEA agents and New York City police officers by claiming at the end that Frank Lucas' collaboration with prosecutors "led to the convictions of three-quarters of New York City's Drug Enforcement Agency."

Lucas, played by Denzel Washington in the film, became a government informant after his conviction in 1975, and his tips led to the prosecutions of several fellow drug dealers.

According to the lawsuit, no DEA agents or New York City police officers were ever convicted as a result of tips provided by Lucas.

"This is absolutely off the wall," said Dominic Amorosa, a prosecutor in the federal case against Lucas in 1975 who now represents the DEA agents. "I don't know what these people were thinking, but they are going to pay for it."

AP

This undated photo originally provided by Universal Studios shows actors Denzel Washington, left, as gangster Frank Lucas and Russell Crowe as outcast cop Richie Roberts in a scene from "American Gangster."

A Universal Pictures spokesman, Michael Moses, said in a written statement that the lawsuit is "entirely without merit."

"'American Gangster' does not defame these or any federal agents," he said, adding that the corrupt law enforcers depicted in the film were supposed to be New York police officers, not DEA agents.

In a Dec. 7 letter to Amorosa, NBC Universal Senior Vice President David Burg called the film a "fictionalized work," although at other times Universal spokesmen have said they have "every confidence that the material facts are conveyed truthfully."

Former DEA agents Jack Toal, Gregory Korniloff and Louis Diaz filed the class-action suit on behalf of themselves and 400 other agents who worked in the city between 1973 and 1985. They asked for at least $50 million in punitive damages.

"Most of the movie is not true," said Toal, who identified himself as one of the agents who worked with Lucas after he became an informant. "If they had said, 'This is based on a false story,' it would have been a lot better."

Butler didn't know if Diana was engaged

LONDON (AP)—Princess Diana's butler said Wednesday that he did not know whether she had become engaged to Dodi Fayed shortly before she died, but that he believed that the relationship was already cooling.

A former chief of London police, also testifying at the inquest into the couple's deaths, denied that his department sat on a clue to a possible conspiracy and insisted the fatal car crash in Paris on Aug. 31, 1997 was purely an accident.

Former butler Paul Burrell, in his third day of testimony at the inquest into the couple's deaths on Aug. 31, 1997, has said Diana was concerned about the possibility that she would be offered a ring, and had accepted the butler's suggestion that she wear it on the fourth finger of her right hand as a sign of friendship.

Burrell said he did not know that Fayed had purchased yet another ring in Paris on the night before they died.

"I knew that she would not get engaged," said Burrell, who confirmed that he did not favor the romance.

Michael Mansfield, an attorney representing Dodi's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, said: "You may like to think you knew that, but actually you don't know, do you?"

"I don't—I don't know," Burrell said.

Mohamed Al Fayed has claimed that his son and the princess were preparing to announce their engagement, and that she was already pregnant. He has alleged that the couple were murdered in a plot directed by Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, and carried out by British intelligence agents.

British and French police concluded that the fatal car crash in a road tunnel in Paris was an accident and blamed driver Henri Paul, who was found to be over the legal alcohol limit.

Burrell

Lord Paul Condon, who headed the Metropolitan Police from 1993 through 1999, said the crash was "not in any way a conspiracy involving members of the royal family or the security services or anyone else at all."

It was "a tragic accident, the facts of which are broadly known for many years and I am not aware, and I am on oath, of anything that would take away from that finding," Condon said.

Mansfield suggested that Diana's swiftly developing romance with Fayed, and Mohamed Al Fayed's support for her campaign against land mines, would have alarmed unidentified forces related to the British establishment and the arms industry.

He has previously suggested that Diana's campaign against land mines was the motive for a plot against her.

"Would you agree ... that by the 31st of August, the alliance created between, and perceived to have been created, between the Al Fayeds and Diana, given all the background, must have appeared to have been an alliance made in hell?" Mansfield said.

"Well, I can't assume that," Burrell said.

Mansfield asserted that Prince Philip had described Dodi Fayed as "an oily bed-hopper."

"I don't think those are his words," Burrell said.

The former butler, who has produced two books about her, said he believed that Diana might already have been tiring of a romance that was no more than six weeks old.

He said Diana had complained in a telephone call that the weather was hot and the cabins in the yacht Jonikal were too cold, and that she was looking forward to coming home.

"I felt she was telling me, she was inferring, that this relationship had reached its peak and was going down the other side," Burrell said.

"Very often relationships did that in the princess' world. She became infatuated, obsessed with someone, and then grew tired of them."

He said he had not known at the time that Dodi Fayed bought a ring in Paris on Aug. 30, 1997. It has been described as an engagement ring.

Burrell said he had seen pictures of the ring, but doubted that Diana would have chosen it for herself.

"She would have found it rather gaudy and lacking of taste," he said.

Alicia Keys is No. 1 as she is

By TODD MARTENS
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Alicia Keys and Radiohead swap places at the top of this week's U.S. album chart, but it's the soundtrack to indie-film-that-could "Juno" that's making the biggest waves on the tally.

The soundtrack album jumps from its No. 8 post last week to No. 3, thanks to a 78 percent increase in sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It moved a total of 68,000 copies this week, bringing it to 143,000 copies sold so far.

Radiohead's "In Rainbows" slips to No. 2 with sales of 69,000 copies. The album, online in October as a pay-what-you-will download, has sold 191,000 copies since its CD release on Jan. 1.

In two weeks in stores, "In Rainbows" still has not sold what Radiohead's last album, 2003's "Hail to the Thief," moved in its first week (300,000 copies).

Keys' "As I Am" returns to No. 1 despite a decline in sales, selling 70,000 copies this week on a 38 percent dip in sales. That's 10,000 copies more than the all-time low figure for a No. 1 album, which was posted during the same week last year by the "Dreamgirls" soundtrack.

This week's top debut comes from electronic-tinged pop artists Sia, whose Starbucks release, "Some People Have Real Problems," enters at No. 26 after selling 20,000 copies. Further down, English singer-songwriter Kate Nash lands at No. 36 with "Made of Bricks."

Faith Hill recovering from knee surgery

NEW YORK (AP)—Faith Hill hasn't wasted time getting back to work following knee surgery last week. Hill, 40, has been recuperating at her home in Nashville, Tenn., and keeping busy with her music engagements, the country star's publicist, Paul Freundlich, told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Hill

The operation was "the result of an old knee injury suffered while playing softball in high school and normal wear and tear over the years," Freundlich said in an e-mail. He didn't say which knee had been repaired.

Afterward, Hill resumed recording her upcoming Christmas album, Freundlich said. She has also been preparing to perform at the Feb. 8 tribute to Aretha Franklin at the MusiCares Person of the Year event in Los Angeles.

MusiCares is a Recording Academy charity that supports the arts community and music education programs.

"Who has time to slow down?" Hill said in a statement. "Doctors had told me to stay off my feet for a bit and now I'm following their rehab program. I intend to be back better and stronger."

Hill, who is married to Tim McGraw, has won numerous honors including Grammy, Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music awards. Her hits include "This Kiss," "Breathe" and "Mississippi Girl."

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

† JOAQUIN IGUEL NORITA

In His new life he now joins His:
Paternal Grandparents: Joseph Omosa & Maria Minisibue Norita
Maternal Grandparents: Jesus San Nicolas Ilano & Rosa Iguel
Father: Vinancio Quitugua Norita
Mother: Blandina Iguel Tenorio
Father in Law: Gregorio Matantaotao Maratita
Mother in Law: Ana Quichocho Maratita
Wife: Margarita Maratita Norita
Sons: Joaquin M. Norita and Joseph M. Norita
Brothers in Law: William Quichocho Maratita, Juan Quichocho Maratita, Eusebio Quichocho Maratita, Herman Tenorio Villagomez, Martin Quitugua, Jose Atalig
Sisters in Law: Presentasion Maratita Igitol, Rufina Quitugua Pangelinan, Maria Q. Atalig
Nieces: Vicky Ann Maratita Igitol, Mae Elaine Maratita Igitol

He is survived by His:
Children: Rebecca Maratita Norita (Fransual M. Norita, Jerrydine N. Atalig & Francisco Quintanilla (Adreana Becalynn), Jerad N. Atalig & Francine Pangelinan), Francisco Maratita & Eloisa I. Norita
Reared Mother: Isabel Norita (Fernando N. Magofna & children, Veronica N. Magofna & children, Ismael N. & Ramona Magofna and children, Remedio & Vaughn Pangelinan and children, Robert N. Magofna & Marcia Igitol & children, Roy & Melanie Magofna and Children, Melissa M. & Isidoro Camacho)
Brothers & Sisters: Ana Tenerio Perry and Chidren, Rosa Tenorio Mc Kinny and children, Maria I. Tenorio and children, Juan I. & Rose Tenorio and children
Brothers & Sisters in-law: David & Lucy Maratita and children, Buenaventura & Myrna Maratita and children, Agnes M. Villagomez and children, Winifreda M. & Luis Sablan and Children, Victoria Santos Maratita and children and Victorino and Alice Igitol and children, Nora Quitugua and children, Oscar & Visitacion Quitugua and children, Fred Q. Maratita, Antonio Q. Maratita, Connie & Bell Manglona, Francisco Pangelinan
Reared Sister in Law: Elizabeth Sasakura

He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, uncles, aunties, God daughters and God sons.

Prayer rosary is being said nightly at 7:30 p.m. at Tanapag (Isabel Norita's residence) Saipan and on Rota at Francisco de Borja Church at 7:00 p.m.

His remains will be flown to Rota on Monday, January 21, 2008 at 10:00am via Freedom Air.

Funeral will take place on Wednesday, January 23, 2008. His remains will be transported from the Rota Health Center to San Francisco de Borja Church at 7:30am. Mass will be at 11:00am followed by burial at the San Jose, Rota Cemetery.

Thank you from Rebecca Francisco & Eloisa Norita and Family

Marion Jones appears on Oprah show

CHICAGO (AP)—Marion Jones said Wednesday seeing the pain her family and friends endured after she admitted using performance-enhancing drugs outweighed the impact of returning her Olympic medals.

The former Olympic track gold medalist appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," her first television interview since being sentenced last week to six months in prison for lying to investigators about steroid use and a check-fraud scam.

"I want people to understand that, you know, everybody makes mistakes. ... I truly think that a person's character is determined by their admission of their mistakes and then beyond that, what do I do about it?" Jones said via satellite from Austin, Texas, where she lives. "How can I change the lives of people? How can I use my story to change the life of a young person?"

AP

Former Olympic champion Marion Jones leaves federal court in White Plains, N.Y., following her sentencing, Friday, Jan. 11, 2008.

Once the most celebrated female athlete in the world, Jones won three gold and two bronze medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

After long denying she ever had used performance-enhancing drugs, Jones admitted last October she lied to federal investigators in November 2003, acknowledging she took the designer steroid "the clear" from September 2000 to July 2001. "The clear" has been linked to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, the lab at the center of the steroids scandal in professional sports.

Winfrey pressed Jones on the repeated, impassioned denials she made over the years. "You knew at that time, you knew were lying, right?" Winfrey said.

"I made a mistake. I made the choice, at that time, to protect myself, to protect my family," Jones said. "And now I've paid the consequences dearly."

Jones said she hasn't told her 4-year-old son yet that she's going to prison. She also has a younger son. She has until March 11 to surrender.

She admitted she was disappointed that she was not give a probation-only sentence, as she and her attorneys hoped for.

"I put myself in a position to have somebody else determine my immediate future," she said. "I made that decision. I have to live with it, my family has to live with it. With the grace of God we'll get through it and come out even better at the other end."

Prosecutors: Snipes warned about taxes

OCALA, Fla. (AP)—A longtime tax adviser warned Wesley Snipes he could get in trouble by hiring new accountants who said he didn't have to pay taxes, a federal prosecutor said Wednesday. In the opening statements of an expected monthlong trial, assistant U.S. Attorney Robert O'Neill said the 45-year-old actor was called by Kenneth Starr, a New York money manager with several famous clients. Starr told Snipes there was no merit to the argument that he didn't have to pay taxes, and the next day sent a letter terminating his tax services, O'Neill said.

"In the '90s, Mr. Snipes was a taxpayer," O'Neill told the jury. "Something happens in the year 2000, and that stops the payment of taxes."

Snipes and two other men, Eddie Ray Kahn and Douglas P. Rosile, are charged with tax fraud and conspiracy in an eight-count grand jury indictment. Snipes is further charged with willfully failing to file tax returns from 1999 to 2004, on the advice of Kahn's tax protest groups American Rights Litigators and Guiding Light of God Ministries.

Snipes

Prosecutors say Kahn and Rosile convinced Snipes that he didn't have to pay taxes based on a fringe misinterpretation of Internal Revenue Service code known as the "861 argument." Long rejected by judges and the IRS, it holds that only wages earned by U.S. citizens outside America are subject to taxation.

Snipes faces up to 16 years in prison if convicted on all eight counts.

The "Blade" action star was the victim of several unscrupulous advisers, his attorneys said Wednesday. Key to the case is whether Snipes intentionally broke the law, because ordinary failure to file tax returns is a civil crime.

Attorney Robert Bernhoft said Snipes didn't trust Starr, which made him "extremely intrigued" to hear Kahn's argument.

Further, Bernhoft said, Snipes relied on the advice of Sylvester Stallone, a fellow Starr client and personal friend. Stallone sued Starr in 2002, alleging his bad advice cost him some $7 million.

"This is not a new story—artists, athletes being taken advantage of," Bernhoft said.

Snipes is also accused of directing his movie companies to stop withholding taxes from employees and fraudulently demanding taxes from years previously paid. Snipes filed amended returns for $11 million in 1996 and 1997 taxes, which the government never gave back.

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Cloverfield

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Sat and Sun	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Monday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Tue thru Thurs		4:00	7:00	

Michael Stahl David, Mike Vogel
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13 ■

Synopsis
Five young New Yorkers throw their friend a going-away party the night that a monster the size of a skyscraper descends upon the city. Their video camera documents their attempt to survive the most surreal, horrifying event of their lives.

27 Dresses

Friday		4:15	7:20	10:00
Sat and Sun	1:10	4:15	7:20	10:00
Monday	1:10	4:15	7:20	
Tue thru Thurs		4:15	7:20	

Katherine Heigl, James Marsden
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG13 ●

Mad Money

Friday		4:25	7:30	9:50
Sat and Sun	1:25	4:25	7:30	9:50
Monday	1:25	4:25	7:30	
Tue thru Thurs		4:25	7:30	

Diane Keaton, Queen Latifah
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13 T

★ ★ ★

The Bucket List

Friday		4:10	7:15	9:30
Sat and Sun	1:20	4:10	7:15	9:30
Monday	1:20	4:10	7:15	
Tue thru Thurs		4:10	7:15	

Jack Nicholson, Morgan Freeman
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13 ■

Synopsis
A long time ago, Carter Chambers' philosophy professor suggested that his students compose a "bucket list," a collection of all the things they wanted to do, see and experience in life before they kicked the bucket. But while Carter was trying to define his private dreams and plans, reality intruded.

First Sunday

Friday		4:30	7:05	9:55
Sat and Sun	1:30	4:30	7:05	9:55
Monday	1:30	4:30	7:05	
Tue thru Thurs		4:30	7:05	

Ice Cube, Regina Hall
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13 ■

Alvin & The Chipmunks

Friday		4:05	7:10	9:35
Sat and Sun	1:05	4:05	7:10	9:35
Monday	1:05	4:05	7:10	
Tue thru Thurs		4:05	7:10	

Jason Lee, Cameron Richardson
Comedy, Family • Rated PG T

One Missed Call

Friday		@	7:25	9:40
Sat and Sun	@	@	7:25	9:40
Monday	@	@		
Tue thru Thurs		@		

Edward Burns, Shannyn Sossamon
Horror, Remake • Rated PG13 T

The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep

Friday		4:20	@	@
Sat and Sun	1:15	4:20	@	@
Monday	1:15	4:20	@	
Tue thru Thurs		4:20	@	

Emily Watson, Ben Chaplin
Family, Adventure • Rated PG T

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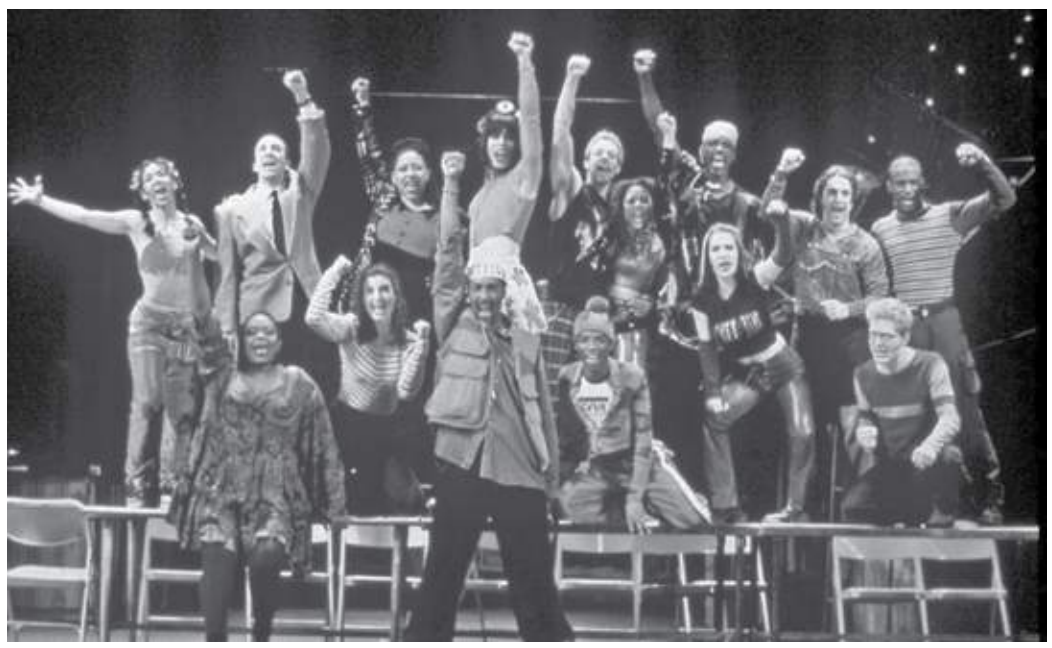


AP

In a photo provided by Keith Sherman and Associates, the cast of "Rent" is pictured in this 1996 file photo at New York's Nederlander Theater.

'Rent' will close June 1 on Broadway

NEW YORK (AP)—"No show runs forever" was one of the more astute observations of Broadway director-choreographer Michael Bennett, the man behind "A Chorus Line," itself a model of longevity.

Bennett's theater truism was reenforced this week with the announcement that the pop-rock musical "Rent" will close June 1 after a 12-year run, 5,012 performances and an assortment of prizes and awards, including the Tony and Pulitzer—not to mentions grosses of over $280 million.

Inspired by the Puccini opera "La Boheme," Jonathan Larson's look at the counterculture residents of New York's East Village in the early 1990s was one of those shows you might have thought would always be around. It spoke to a generation, much like "Hair" did in the late 1960s and perhaps "Spring Awakening" does to the current crop of young theatergoers.

"Rent" was born in tragedy, with the 35-year-old Larson dying just before the show began performances at off-Broadway's New York Theatre Workshop. The musical received rave reviews and in April 1996 quickly moved to Broadway's Nederlander Theatre, where it became the theater's longest-running tenant.

"Rent" will end its engagement in seventh place on Broadway's long-run list, behind "The Phantom of the Opera," "Cats," "Les Miserables," "A Chorus Line," "Oh! Calcutta!" and "Beauty and the Beast."

"Phantom," of course, is still on the boards—Broadway's longest running show. And on Saturday Jan. 26, when it plays performances number 8,318 and 8,319, "Phantom" will celebrate its 20th year on Broadway. Stay tuned for its final curtain. You may have to wait a while—but it will come.

Murphy, Edmonds 'friends,' not spouses

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The wedding ceremony between Eddie Murphy and film producer Tracey Edmonds two weeks ago was only symbolic—and that's as far as they plan to go, they announced Wednesday.

Murphy, 46, and Edmonds, 40, traded vows on New Year's Day on a private island off Bora Bora in French Polynesia in a ceremony that was not legally binding.

"After much consideration and discussion, we have jointly decided that we will forgo having a legal ceremony as it is not necessary to define our relationship further," said a statement on behalf of both Murphy and Edmonds issued by publicist Arnold Robinson.

"While the recent symbolic union in Bora Bora was representative of our deep love, friendship and respect that we have for one another on a spiritual level, we have decided to remain friends," the statement said.

The statement did not clarify whether the two remained a couple. In an e-mail exchange, Robinson said he could not comment beyond the statement.

Murphy has six children from previous relationships. He and Edmonds, whose credits include "Dreamgirls" and "Beverly Hills Cop," began dating last year. They became engaged in July.

Eddie Murphy and Tracey Edmonds arrive at "Movies Rock: A Celebration of Music in Film," at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles, in this Dec. 2, 2007, file photo.

AP

BAFTA NOMINEE AP

French actress Marion Cotillard arrives to the 20th European Film Awards in Berlin in this, Dec. 1, 2007, file photo. Marion Cotillard has been nominated in the best actress category for her role in "La Vie on Rose" at next month's BAFTA (British Academy Film Awards), the film has a further six nominations.

Hamill returning to 'Broadway on Ice'

BALTIMORE (AP)—Olympic gold medalist Dorothy Hamill is back on the ice.

She was to return to the national "Broadway on Ice" tour Wednesday night after taking time off because of breast cancer. The 51-year-old skater left the tour this month for treatment at the Kimmel Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

She will headline the performance in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., said Gerry Porter, a publicist representing "Broadway on Ice." Olympic gold medalist Brian Boitano and two-time Olympic medalist Nancy Kerrigan filled in during Hamill's absence.

Hamill was a three-time U.S. champion and won the world title and Olympic gold in 1976. She retired and joined the Ice Capades in 1977.

McConaughey, Hudson among SAG presenters

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Matthew McConaughey and his two-time co-star Kate Hudson are among those set to present trophies at next week's Screen Actors Guild Awards. SAG officials said Wednesday that McConaughey and Hudson will be joined at the Jan. 27 awards ceremony by Denis Leary and Burt Reynolds, who are set to present the guild's 44th life achievement award to Charles Durning.

Reynolds is a longtime friend and collaborator of the 84-year-old actor, who co-stars with Leary on the FX show "Rescue Me."

McConaughey, who announced Tuesday that he is expecting a baby with his girlfriend, Camila Alves, has shared the screen with Hudson twice, in 2003's "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" and the upcoming romantic comedy "Fool's Gold."

Previously announced presenters include Zac Efron, Emile Hirsch and Vanessa Williams. The 14th annual SAG Awards are set to be broadcast live on TNT and TBS from the Shrine Auditorium.

George Michael signs big book deal

NEW YORK (AP)—In what his publisher calls a record-breaking deal, British pop superstar George Michael is working on a memoir to come out in the fall of 2009.

HarperCollins says the book, currently untitled, will be an "access all areas" story, with the 44-year-old Michael writing extensively about his professional and personal life.

Michael

A publishing official with knowledge of the negotiations said the deal was worth at least $6 million for British rights alone, among the biggest publishing contracts ever for that market, and at least $7 million overall.

"George has promised HarperCollins a no-holds barred biography, and it's certain to be just that," the singer's manager, Andy Stephens, said in a statement Wednesday. "People aren't stupid, they're beginning to notice that the truth is more interesting than the stories the press come up with!"

Michael, whose many hits include "Careless Whisper," "Faith" and "Father Figure," has had several run-ins with the law, on charges ranging from drug possession to lewd conduct. Elton John, with whom Michael has performed on stage, has spoken of a "deep-rooted unhappiness" in the singer's life.

'Idol' ratings down from last year

NEW YORK (AP)—Fox's "American Idol" returned as the nation's most popular TV series, but with 4 million fewer viewers than the 2007 season premiere. Tuesday's debut was seen by 33.4 million viewers, down 11 percent from the 37.4 million who watched the first show, according to preliminary ratings by Nielsen Media Research.

That still ranks as the most-watched show of the TV season, excluding sports. The previous high was the 25.4 million who saw the season premiere of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" on CBS in the fall. More people were watching Fox in those two hours than the combined audience for ABC, CBS, NBC and the CW.

It was a noticeably nicer "American Idol" after producers were criticized last year for meanness during the audition rounds of the talent contest.

Yet the ratings will be watched closely for signs of further erosion. There was a very slight decline in viewership last season compared to 2006.

Man professes love for woman his friends say not to marry

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'll be brief. I am in love with a woman who has multiple personality disorder. My friends tell me I'm a fool for falling in love with such a woman.

I love her with all my heart and soul. I know I have a lot to handle, but my love for her is strong, and I know we can prevail. What do you think?

TRUE LOVE TEXAN

DEAR TEXAN: I'll be brief. I think you had better be absolutely certain that you love every facet of her splintered personality before any or all of you make a lifelong commitment.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Have I committed a social error? The 97-year-old mother of an in-law of ours died recently. The family asked that memorials be sent to the local hospice in her memory. I sent a sizable check, but because we loved her like our own mother, I wanted also to send flowers.

I went to our florist and personally selected a beautiful vase that I thought the daughter could keep, and had it filled with flowers.

After the funeral service, as I walked by the casket, the daughter said to me, "Mother wanted memorials made to hospice." (Right! "Mother" was so out of it for several months that she didn't even know she was under hospice care.)

I spent a lot of money on that funeral and don't regret it. But why did the daughter make me feel so bad? She lashed out at me for doing something out of love for her and her mother. When we left the church the flowers were sitting there with our card still attached. Obviously, they didn't want them or the vase, so I brought them home to enjoy and will give the vase to one of my daughters.

Should I say anything, or should I consider the source?

DONNA IN AKRON, OHIO

DEAR DONNA: You should consider the circumstances. People who are grieving are not usually at their best or most gracious. The daughter may have been under the impression that the family's wishes had been ignored, and you had sent flowers instead of donating to the group that had helped and supported them and their mother during that critical time.

If the daughter hasn't already been notified about your generous gift (most organizations do inform the family of the deceased about donations received in their loved one's memory), I see nothing wrong with straightening out the misunderstanding. But do it gently and without anger.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I recently let a friend borrow a bracelet of mine. I left it at her house and asked that she return it the next time we saw each other. That was Sunday morning, and I even called ahead of time to make sure she remembered. When we met, she told me she had forgotten to bring it.

A few days later I was at her house again. When she gave me the bracelet, it had been completely destroyed by her cat. She apologized and said she'd replace it. I said it was OK, and then asked if she would really buy me a new one. "No," she replied, "my cat did it, not me." I decided not to push the issue. The bracelet wasn't too expensive, but I feel I deserve some sort of payment because the cat didn't know any better. What should I do?

AT A LOSS IN MINNESOTA

DEAR AT A LOSS: The bracelet may not have been "too expensive," but chalk this up as a valuable lesson. Your "friend" is irresponsible and not entirely truthful. Unless you're willing to risk losing what you lend her, refrain from making that mistake again.

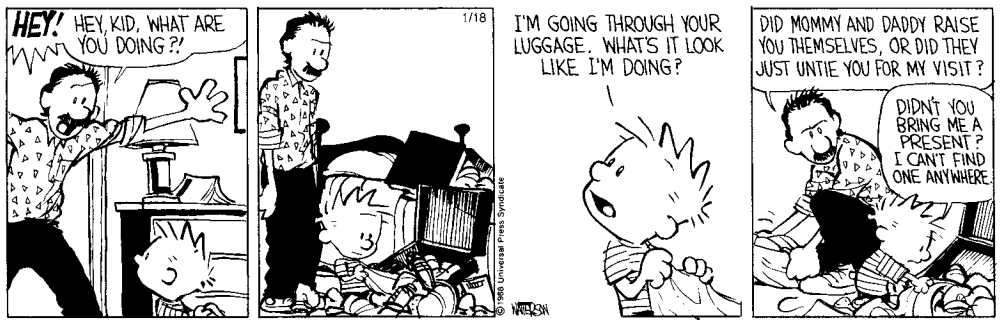
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HEY!
HEY, KID, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
1/18
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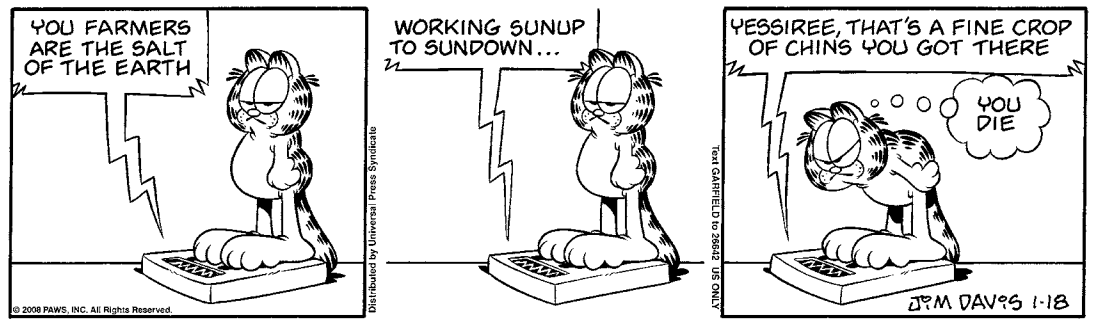
I'M GOING THROUGH YOUR LUGGAGE. WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING?
DID MOMMY AND DADDY RAISE YOU THEMSELVES, OR DID THEY JUST UNTIE YOU FOR MY VISIT?
DIDN'T YOU BRING ME A PRESENT? I CAN'T FIND ONE ANYWHERE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis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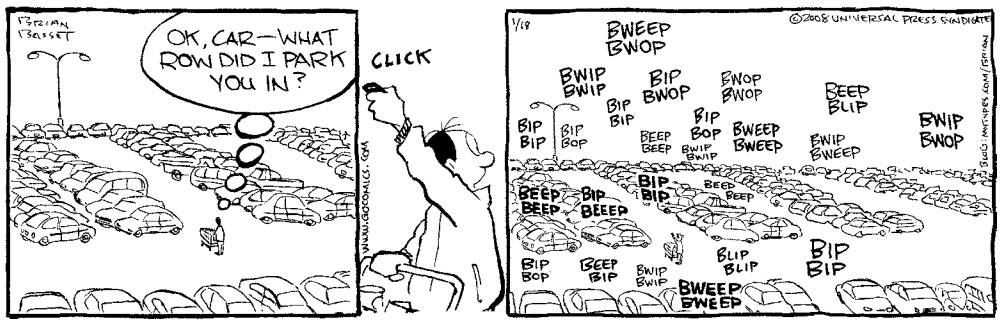
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHEN I WAS A KID I HAD A FRIEND WHOSE FAMILY WAS IN THE MOB.
1-18
2008 © Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
ONE DAY AT RECESS WE GOT IN A FIGHT.
Glenn McCoy
THE NEXT DAY MY HOT WHEEL EXPLODED.
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

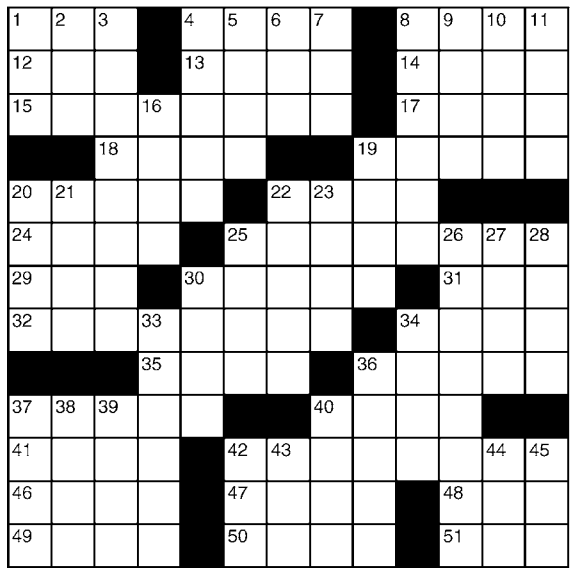
ACROSS
1 Sticky situation?
4 Island garlands
8 "Look out!"
12 Lemieux milieu
13 La Scala show-stopper
14 Satan's specialty
15 It follows Paleozoic
17 Hide-aways
18 Females
19 Make a name for oneself?
20 Wanders
22 Harbor structure
24 Early birds?
25 French-women
29 Exist
30 Poolroom supply
31 15-Across, e.g.
32 Grill fuel
34 11th-graders' exam (Abbr.)
35 Coffee-shop vessels
36 "Beau —"
37 Exam format
40 Ganges garment
41 Twosome
42 Dining compan-ion at sea
46 "— It Roman-tic?"
47 Feedbag filler
48 "2001" computer
49 At the home of (Fr.)
50 Not idle
51 James Bond, e.g.

DOWN
1 He played Gomer
2 Expert
3 Stack on the reception-ist's desk
4 Lolls about
5 Piccadilly statue
6 Midafter-noon, on a sundial
7 Pouch
8 Man's hat
9 Finished
10 Chime
11 Differently
16 Measures of resis-tance
19 Govern-ment agents
20 Paper quantity
21 Shrek, for instance
22 Hides
23 Capri or Man
25 Primary
26 Professed leaders
27 Part of Q.E.D.
28 Appease to the max
30 Put dirt on
33 Earth's most abundant mineral
34 Hair salon request
36 Talking a lot but not saying anything
37 Grand story
38 Obi
39 Trig function
40 Bygone planes
42 Horde
43 Perfume label word
44 Spigot
45 Town of Cam-bridge-shire

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	O	A	P		W	E	D		C	L	A	D
T	H	R	U		R	A	W		H	E	R	O
E	M	I	R		I	R	A		E	A	C	H
P	S	A	L	M	S		R	A	S	P		
			O	U	T	O	F	S	T	Y	L	E
C	U	P	I	D		W	E	S		E	E	L
I	R	O	N		E	N	D		S	A	S	S
A	D	S		A	G	E		P	U	R	S	E
O	U	T	O	F	O	R	D	E	R			
		P	I	T	T		I	N	M	O	S	T
C	O	O	L		I	O	N		I	D	E	A
A	N	N	E		S	U	E		S	O	R	T
D	E	E	D		M	R	S		E	R	A	S

Yesterday's answer 1-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jesse L. Martin, 39; Jane Horrocks, 44; Mark Messier, 47; Kevin Costner, 53

Happy Birthday: Keep your emotions in check or you may miss out on something important this year. Once you take the first step toward how you want your life to be, you will find it much easier to follow through. So get motivated and, if your heart is telling you it's time for change, listen and follow through. Your numbers are 3, 16, 22, 27, 31, 48

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Your fast response will ensure you a spot. Sign up for something that interests you. Love is on the rise and you will connect with someone on many different levels today. Mix business with pleasure. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't go halfway. If you start something, finish it. You can express yourself but don't expect everyone to agree with you. If you take over, you will end up with responsibilities you may not want later in the day. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You can lap up all the attention today by voicing your opinion and taking charge of what's going on around you. Your wit, charm and speedy actions will impress someone who counts. Advancement is heading your way. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You can make a change but do so for the right reasons. If it will bring in more cash or improve your skills, don't hesitate to make your move. Living in the past will be what holds you back. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Get involved in something you care about and you will have the time of your life. Helping others and being generous is just part of your makeup. Put time aside for romance. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep a close eye on someone you find acting a little suspicious. You may have to say no in order to avoid a disaster. It's up to you to protect your position, your assets and your personal life from anyone trying to undermine you. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Everything is turning in your favor except some minor aggravations going on at home or with loved ones. Surround yourself with friends and you will better understand what needs to be done to make your domestic scene better. Make positive changes. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): An unusual moneymaking opportunity will surface. Take a little extra time to lay out a good plan of action. Listen to someone with experience and you will be able to forgo some of the unnecessary steps, saving valuable time. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be emotional, pushy and will probably get yourself into all sorts of trouble today if you exaggerate, take on too much or make promises you have no intention keeping. Focus on love and ways to have fun without going into debt. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You are likely to feel a little confused about your future if someone has been embellishing how things can turn out if you follow a certain path. Wait and watch until you can actually see the potential that is possible. A change will be good only if it's right for you. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): There will be plenty of opportunity for you to impress others with your knowledge and your vision. Your intuition will be right on so don't second-guess your own ability or talent. You know exactly where you fit in. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't give in to pressure. Take positive action and you will soon see who deserves help and who doesn't. Don't lead anyone on. Tell the truth and you will accomplish far more on your own. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are strong, passionate and ready for any challenge. You are curious and unafraid—an all-or-nothing person who is able to make a difference to your world.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			3	4				
	7	8			6	3	9	
	1		7		3			2
3				2				6
4			1		9		8	
	3	2	9			4	1	
				5	1			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	8	5	6	7	4	3	2	9
2	3	9	8	5	1	7	6	4
7	6	4	3	9	2	1	8	5
6	1	3	7	4	8	9	5	2
5	9	8	1	2	6	4	3	7
4	2	7	5	3	9	8	1	6
8	7	2	9	6	3	5	4	1
3	5	6	4	1	7	2	9	8
9	4	1	2	8	5	6	7	3

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/17

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

NICKNAMES **Solution: 8 letters**

E	L	L	N	T	A	R	E	T	U	P	M	O	C	I
T	L	A	O	E	H	L	Z	Y	E	V	N	O	C	N
U	N	B	E	G	V	I	I	E	M	L	P	I	E	F
T	E	E	A	C	I	I	N	A	A	A	T	T	P	O
I	V	L	R	R	N	N	G	G	S	S	R	I	E	R
T	I	D	A	A	I	O	O	S	I	O	Y	K	T	M
S	T	N	S	E	P	S	C	R	H	(E)	E	S	S	A
B	U	E	M	A	N	R	E	S	U	(T)	G	T	S	L
U	N	I	A	S	E	T	R	D	A	(U)	A	S	P	I
S	I	R	E	A	C	S	E	P	E	(C)	T	I	U	K
S	M	F	T	A	Y	U	P	R	S	C	S	T	O	E
B	I	E	R	M	Q	O	L	G	W	O	L	R	R	J
U	D	A	B	I	I	H	A	N	D	L	E	A	G	O
L	H	O	N	N	R	T	C	N	E	T	W	O	R	K
C	L	U	T	D	T	N	E	M	R	A	E	D	N	E

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Alias, Appoint, Artists, Characteristic, Clubs, Computer, Conceal, Convey, Create, Cute, Declare, Desirable, Diminutive, Easy, Endearment, Enter, Friend, Given, Groups, Handle, Informal, Joke, Label, Like, Login, Mark, Network, Parent, Pets, Recognize, Replace, Shorten, Stage, Substitute, Symbol, Tags, Teams, Thing, Title, Unique, Username

Yesterday's Answer: Provoke

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6688. **Sorry,** no online orders for this special offer.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 LIVE IN MAID (F 13252)
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---

1 ACCOUNTANT (F 13253)
Salary:$3.55-$9.50/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation; life insurance & 80% company share on medical premium. Contact: Saipan Shipping Company, Inc. @322-9706/07.

1 (ACCOUNTING) MANAGER (F 13254)
Salary:$1,000.00-$2,600.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation insurance; life insurance & 80% company share on medical premium. Transportation provided to & from work. Contact: Saipan Shipping Company, Inc. @322-9706/07.

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1 CARPENTER (F 13255)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical re-imbursable & workers compensation insurance. Contact: B&P Inc. dba B&P Smart Furniture @234-9357.

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1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13256)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: J. Lee Development Corp. @322-6290.

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1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (F 13257)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee self housing; employee self food; free medical & worker compensation. Contact: Royal Supplies Inc. @288-3388.

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1 (BOAT FISHING) DECKHAND (F 13258)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workman's compensation. Contact: L.I.F.E. Inc. @234-3533/233-0533.

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1 SUPERVISOR (FOUNTAIN SERVER) (F 13259)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical. Contact: 3's Inc. dba Hula Girl @234-3533.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (F 13260)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; medical expense & workers compensation. Contact: Henry E. Elayda dba Henry Store @235-9382.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 WAITER/WAITRESS (F 13261)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13262)
Salary:$3.60-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (F 13263)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (F 13264)
Salary:$3.55-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

1 STOREKEEPER (F 13265)
Salary:$3.60-$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/ Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

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1 WAREHOUSE WORKER (F 13266)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workman's compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering Services Inc. dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

2 FOOD SERVER (F 13267)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Workman's compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Auntie Mag's Food & Catering Services Inc. dba Auntie Mag's Food & Catering @288-4799.

WHATZIT Solution:
Safety measures

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1 COOK (F 13268)
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4 BEDROOMS/2 BATHROOMS CONCRETE HOUSE W/BIG OUTSIDE KITCHEN SEMI OR FULLY FURNISH, WITH BACK-UP WATER TANK/PUMP, BIG PATIO & YARD, SAFE AND QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATED AT CHALAN KIYA NEAR SAIPAN HEALTH CLINIC. APPROVED NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC) LANDLORD
PLEASE CALL 285-3370 or 234-1994

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Plaintiff
BMW CORPORATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BMW CORPORATION, Plaintiff, v. AB KON CO. and JAY KIM, in his capacity as Company President, Defendant.	CIVIL CASE NO. 07-0313 **SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION.**

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT: JAY KIM

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Law Offices of Danilo T. Aguilar, whose address is P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose, Saipan MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of the Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment of default may be taken against you for the relief in the complaint.

By order of this Court.

/s/ Clerk of Courts
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands

Dated this 13th day of December, 2007.

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Plaintiff
BMW CORPORATION

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BMW CORPORATION, Plaintiff, v. AB KON CO. and JAY KIM, in his capacity as Company President, Defendant.	CIVIL CASE NO. 07-0313 **SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION.**

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT: AB KON CO.

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith, within thirty (30) days after the service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Law Offices of Danilo T. Aguilar, whose address is P.O. Box 505301, First Floor San Jose Court Bldg., Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way, San Jose, Saipan MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of the Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment of default may be taken against you for the relief in the complaint.

By order of this Court.

/s/ Clerk of Courts
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands

Dated this 30th day of November, 2007.

Katsumasa Hirai
P.O. Box 8049 SVRB,
Saipan, MP 96950
TEL. 670-287-2778

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF: CHELSEA FLORES HIRAI a minor child BY: KATSUMASA HIRAI Petitioner,	**FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0010** **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on February 28, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 205A, before the Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*	
• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1
Combo (Print and Online)*	
• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2
Radio (KCNM/KZMI)	
• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

The Saipan Tribune now offers

Classified Ads Super Saver Package

for Print and Online Editions

A complete 7-day run for car sales, employment, garage sales, apartment rentals, announcements, lost and found, business services, and more…

3-LINER AD $25

3-LINER AD W/ PHOTO $45

5-LINER AD $35

5-LINER AD W/ PHOTO $55

Get results. Advertise now!

Call now at 235-2769 for more details.

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Subscribe to CNMI's First Daily Newspaper

235-NEWS

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13269)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Roy Jen Enterprise Inc. dba Bud's Bar @898-4866.

1 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13270)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Roy Jen Enterprise Inc. dba Bud's Bar @898-4866.

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2 MASON (F 13271)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer housing; employee food; medical & worksman compensation. Contact: Vargas Corporation @235-0297.

1 CARPENTER (F 13272)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer housing; employee food; medical & worksman compensation. Contact: Vargas Corporation @235-0297.

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1 GENERAL MANAGER (F 13273)
Salary:$1,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical expenses company provided. Contact: Wondersea Saipan Inc. @233-7011.

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1 WAITRESS/WAITER (F 13274)
Salary:$3.40-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; workers compensation & medical expense. Contact: M. Samwa Planning Ltd. @235-7102.

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1 BEAUTICIAN (F 13275)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; transportation employee provided; medical & workers compensation employer provided. Contact: Esquire Enterprises, Inc. @234-6564.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (LIVE-IN) (F 13276)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deduction; $100.00/food deduction & medical provided. Contact: Yiyao Zhang @235-8163.

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1 SUBA DIVING INSTRUCTOR (F 13277)
Salary:$1,000.00/monthly. Benefits: $200.00/housing allowance; medical & workmens compensation. Contact: Big Dog Corporation dba Big Dog Dive Station Saipan @235-7706.

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1 TEACHER (DAYCARE) (F 13278)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Yeldez T. Javier dba Loving Hands Daycare @235-0611.

1 HOUSEWORKER (F 13279)
Salary:$3.55/hour. ER provided housing; ER provided food; medical & worksman compensation. Contact: Yeldez T. Javier dba Loving Hands Daycare @235-0611.

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1 MAINTENANCE (F 13280)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided by employer. Contact: Monica S. Manalo dba Monia's Music Studio @288-6683.

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1 SALES REPRESENATIVE (F 13281)
Salary:$800.00/monthly. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workman's compensation. Contact: Bernadita R. Cabrera dba Northshore Marine Sports @483-9991.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (LIVE IN) (ST 7285)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Deduction $100.00/monthly housing; deduction $100.00/monthly food & medical provided. Contact: Maria Glenn G. and Patricia Lynn A. Mendoza @235-2043.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP08-CHC-032

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 15, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"LABORATORY SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT **9:00 A.M., FEBRUARY 6, 2008** AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP08-CHC-033

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 15, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"HOSPITAL FOOD AND CAFETERIA SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT **10:00 A.M., FEBRUARY 06, 2008** AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP08-CHC-034

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 15, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"PRIVATIZATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER–HEMODIALYSIS UNIT"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT **11:00 A.M., FEBRUARY 06, 2008** AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: RFP08-DCCA/HPO-027

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 13, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"PREPARATION OF MARITIME CONTEXT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ MELVIN L.O. FAISAO
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: RFP08-DCCA/HPO-028

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 13, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"TO CONDUCT UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY REMOTE SENSING SURVEY OF THE TANAPAG LAGOON, SAIPAN, CNMI FOR THE DCCA-HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ MELVIN L.O. FAISAO
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: RFP08-DCCA/HPO-029

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 13, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"TO CONDUCT ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY AND NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR JAPANESE DEFENSIVE COMPLEX ON THE ISLAND OF ROTA, CNMI FOR THE DCCA-HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ MELVIN L.O. FAISAO
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: RFP08-DCCA/HPO-030

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 13, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"TO DEMONSTRATE THE USE AND INTERPRETATION OF GROUND PENETRATING RADAR FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS FOR THE DCCA-HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ MELVIN L.O. FAISAO
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP: RFP08-DCCA/HPO-031

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 13, 2008 **TIME: 2:00 P.M.**

"CREATION OF ELECTRONIC DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR THE DCCA-HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ MELVIN L.O. FAISAO
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT • P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 664-3500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962 • E-mail Address: cpa.admin@saipan.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.com

SECOND AMENDED INVITATION TO BID
No. CPA-SA-2007-001
SALE OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL LUMBER:

	ITEMS	QUANTITY	MINIMUM BID
1.	4"x 6" x 18'	678 pieces	$30.00 each
2.	4"x 12" x 18'	302 pieces	$50.00 each

Interested individuals or firms may submit bids for the purchasing of the above listed lumber to the Acting Executive Director, Mr. Stanley C. Torres, at the CPA Administration Office, Second Floor of the Arrival Building at the Saipan International Airport, during regular working hours.

Bidders are able to inspect the items for bid, Mondays through Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except legal holidays. For inspection arrangements, please contact Mr. Joe Santos at 664-3538.

Bids will be accepted on a "first come, first serve" basis and the listed prices are final. There will be no negotiations for price reductions. For more information, please call (670) 664-3500.

/s/ STANLEY C. TORRES
Acting Executive Director

Date: January 17, 2008

PTI Your connection to the world

VEHICLE AUCTION

Place: PTI Parking Lot Susupe
When: January 18, 2008 [Friday]
Time: 5:00 p.m.

For more info pls. contact: Allen Palacios at 682-2404

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-009

The Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery and installation of **School and Office Furniture for Kagman High School, Saipan**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-009" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **February 11, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-009, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1)-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via the following fax number: (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) business days prior to the deadline to submit bids.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 or 3035.

Bidders are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Request for Proposal
RFP 08-011

The Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the **Preventative Maintenance, Repair, Parts Supply and General Automotive Services for the Public School System Bus and Vehicle Fleets**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill,, Saipan, MP 96950.

All proposals shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "RFP 08-011" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 6, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "RFP 08-011, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their proposal, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards, to split awards, or to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB# 08-018

The Public School System (PSS) and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting for competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop & Laptop Computer Systems and Accessories for Saipan Community School (SCS)** on the island of Saipan.

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All Bid Proposals must be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB # 08-018" and submitted one (1) original with four (4) copies to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 18, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB# 08-018, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original with 4-copies). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl F. dela Cruz, Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791 Alternatively, technical questions mail be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all proposals if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All proposals shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Acting, Procurement and Supply Office at telephone number 237-3077 or 3062 or 3035.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting, Procurement & Supply Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-012

The CNMI Public School System (PSS) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for **Security Services for all Public School Campuses and PSS Properties located in the CNMI.** Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids must be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-012" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in separate envelope marked "IFB 08-012, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions must be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be emailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the deadline for submission of bids.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-013

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop Computers, Notebook Computers, and Projectors for Garapan Elementary School, Saipan**.

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-013" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 8, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in separate envelope marked "IFB 08-013, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-014

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the **Supply, Delivery, and Installation of Accordion Type Aluminum Typhoon Shutters for Various PSS Head Start Centers located throughout the CNMI**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-014" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 8, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-014, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (1-original and one copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl Dela Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**.

Contractors are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI business license.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-015

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop Computers and Accessories for Tinian Jr./Sr. High School.**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-015" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-015, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

Allen helps Celtics beat Blazers, 100-90

BOSTON (AP)—Ray Allen scored a season-high 35 points, Kevin Garnett had 26 and the Boston Celtics rebounded from their first consecutive losses of the season with a 100-90 win over Portland on Wednesday night.

The Atlantic Division-leading Celtics, who had lost three of their last four games and two straight at home, also got 12 points from Paul Pierce and 10 from Eddie House. Boston had lost its last two games, both to Washington.

Brandon Roy led the Northwest division-leading Trail Blazers with 22 points. Travis Outlaw and Jarrett Jack each had 17.

Portland, which lost for just the third time in 21 games overall, fell to just 6-12 on the road.

Allen scored 12 points, including eight straight in the third quarter, helping the Celtics take a 74-69 lead after three. Allen scored 26 points in the second half.

Portland tied it at 56 before Kendrick Perkins' free throw moved the Celtics ahead for good. House followed with a 3 from the right corner before Allen took over, scoring off drives to the basket three times and hitting a pair of free throws to give Boston 68-63 lead.

AP

Boston Celtics guard Ray Allen (20) pumps his fists after hitting a 3-pointer in the final minute of an NBA basketball game against the Portland Trail Blazers in Boston, Wednesday Jan. 16, 2008.

After the Trail Blazers cut it to 71-69, Allen completed his quarter with a reverse layup. He then opened the fourth with a jumper from the right baseline on Boston's first possession and Tony Allen had a breakaway dunk, giving the Celtics a 78-69 advantage.

Portland cut it to 80-75 on Outlaw's 3 with 7:55 to go, but Ray Allen hit a key 3, followed that with a turnaround jumper and added a 3 with 50 seconds left to help Boston seal the win.

Ray Allen capped his second half with four free throws in the final 31 seconds.

Portland led 45-43 at halftime.

Knicks 111, Nets 105

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Jamal Crawford scored a season-high 35 points and hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer, and New York took the season series from New Jersey for the first time in eight years.

Zach Randolph added 24 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks, who are 3-0 against their cross-river rivals after the Nets had owned the series since Jason Kidd arrived in the area in 2000.

New York has won three in a row for the first time in a year.

Vince Carter scored 26 points and Kidd had 10 points and 17 assists for the Nets.

Hornets 123, SuperSonics 92

At New Orleans, Peja Stojakovic scored 23 points, leading six Hornets in double figures, and New Orleans easily defeated Seattle.

Tyson Chandler had 14 points and 21 rebounds and Chris Paul had 12 points and 11 assists. It was the 12th time they've had double-doubles in the same game this season, and New Orleans has won all of those games. David West added 19 points and 11 rebounds.

Kevin Durant led Seattle with 20 points, while Earl Watson added 17 and 11 assists for the Sonics, who've lost 10 of 11 games.

Raptors 116, Kings 91

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 31 points and Toronto spoiled Mike Bibby's season debut for Sacramento.

Carlos Delfino came off the bench to score a season-high 26, and Jose Calderon had 17 points and 14 assists. Bosh, who added nine rebounds, has scored 20 or more in seven of Toronto's past eight games.

Playing for the first time after missing 36 games with a torn ligament in his left thumb, Bibby's season began when he came off the bench late in the first quarter. He finished with 19 points and six rebounds in 29 minutes.

Bobcats 99, Magic 93

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Gerald Wallace had 36 points and 14 rebounds, Jason Richardson hit a 3-pointer and four free throws in the final minute for Charlotte.

The Bobcats, who trailed by 19 points early in the third quarter, avoided a season sweep against Orlando.

Dwight Howard had 24 points and 21 rebounds and Carlos Arroyo came off the bench to score 17 points for they Magic, who fell apart after point guard Jameer Nelson left because of a strained tendon in his right foot in the third quarter.

Pacers 125, Warriors 117

At Indianapolis, Danny Granger scored 29 points and Indiana overcame a 17-point deficit in the second half.

Indiana's Mike Dunleavy had 24 points and nine rebounds against his former team, and Kareem Rush scored 14 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter.

Baron Davis had 24 points, seven assists, seven steals and six rebounds, Al Harrington had 22 points and Stephen Jackson had 17 points and eight assists for Golden State.

Bulls 126, Heat 96

At Miami, Ben Gordon scored 24 points, Joe Smith added 23 and Chicago handed Miami its 11th straight loss.

Luol Deng had 21 points, Andres Nocioni 20 and Thabo Sefolosha a season-high 17 points for the Bulls, whose 126 points were a season high.

Shaquille O'Neal had 24 points and 10 rebounds in his return to the lineup for Miami for the first time since Dec. 26, and fouled out for the sixth time this season. After making only two of his first nine shots, Dwyane Wade finished with 24 points.

Bucks 87, Hawks 80

At Milwaukee, Andrew Bogut had 21 points, 10 rebounds and four blocked shots and Milwaukee beat Atlanta.

The Hawks, losers of 18 of their last 20 in Milwaukee, failed to hit a field goal for more than 12 minutes spanning the third and fourth quarters, missing 13 straight shots.

Two free throws by Marvin Williams, who scored 22 points, tied the game at 74-all with four minutes left, but the Bucks went on a 7-0 run with a 3-pointer by Charlie Bell, a layup by Charlie Villanueva and a jumper by Royal Ivey, who replaced an ill Mo Williams in the lineup.

Federer and Venus Williams advance

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Roger Federer was prepared to be entertained against Fabrice Santoro. The Swiss star even chimed in.

Santoro's wily courtcraft, anticipation and phenomenal retrieving have carried him through a record 62 Grand Slam tournaments, but he was no match for Federer when they shared the stage Thursday at the Australian Open.

Often players get frustrated with chasing chips, drops and between-the-leg shots and are bamboozled when Santoro goes to his unusual double-handed slice forehand.

But against Federer, who can pick up half-volleys and turn them into winners like nobody else on tour, Santoro didn't have a chance.

When Santoro did win a closely contested point when Federer miscued an overhead from an opportunistic defensive lob, he threw up his hands in victory and jogged around in circles as if he had just finished off the match.

But it was a rare mistake for Federer, who had 53 winners and 18 unforced errors and ran off the last 10 games of a 6-1, 6-2, 6-0 win to advance to the third round.

Federer set up match point with a leaping overhead, prompting a plea from Santoro for a bit of mercy as he nodded toward the scoreboard.

He got a laugh and a slight pause from Federer, who then held at love and strode over the net to congratulate Santoro for bettering Andre Agassi's 61 majors by one.

"Obviously I always enjoy the match against Fabrice," said Federer, chasing his third consecutive Australian Open title and his 13th major. "First time I played him, he totally dismantled me. Showed I had a lot of things to work on.

"Today I was in great shape, could play aggressive. We always have great rallies together, because of his playing style ... he does a great job of making you doubt."

Santoro, at 35 the oldest player in the singles draw, was good natured on and off the court.

"Regarding the score, it was not easy to have fun," he said, "but I tried to have some."

Venus Williams' radar was off against Camille Pin, but she did not want to risk going three sets against the Frenchwoman.

Down a break of serve in the second set, the eighth-ranked Williams rallied to get back to 4-4 and won the last two games for a 7-5, 6-4 victory.

Pin has never been beyond the second round in 19 majors but Williams would have been aware of the 26-year-old Frenchwoman's never-say-die approach if she tracked Maria Sharapova's path to the final last year.

Pin rallied from 5-0 down in the third set and had a chance to serve for the match at 7-6 before eventually losing 9-7 in the first round last year against the then top-seeded Sharapova. Sharapova progressed to the final before losing to Venus' sister, Serena Williams.

Venus Williams didn't help herself with six double faults and 44 unforced errors as she tried to push Pin around the court.

She looked stiff and trudged back to the baseline talking to herself as her mistakes piled up. Her serve was broken four straight times in the first set. She was spraying groundstrokes, particularly her backhand.

Pin kept Williams from getting into a rhythm by mixing up her spins and drawing Williams in with drop shots, then sending her scampering back to the baseline with well-placed lobs.

"She's was a real fighter ... really feisty," said Williams, who will face No. 31 Sania Mirza of India, a 6-1 4-6 7-5 winner over Timea Bacsinszky .

Second-ranked Svetlana Kuznetsova was desperate to win the first set for her own reasons against Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova. The former U.S. Open champion has never won a match at the Australian Open after conceding the first set.

And she had her difficulties in a 7-6 (0), 6-2 win, having to come back from 3-0 and 5-2 down in the first set.

"It was really hard. She played really well. I didn't do my job well in the first set," Kuznetsova said. "A Grand Slam is seven different matches, some days you don't feel good."

"I was trying to stay in the game, was 100 percent focussed on that but sometimes it just wasn't going my way. I'm sure I'll play better next time."

Other women's seeded players advancing were No. 6 Anna Chakvetadze, No. 9 Daniela Hantuchova and No. 27 Maria Kirilenko, who beat Akiko Morigami of Japan 6-1, 6-1. Joining Federer in the third round were No. 13 Tomas Berdych, who beat Oscar Hernandez 6-2, 6-1, 6-3, and former No. 1 Juan Carlos Ferrero.

Two men who beat Federer last season, No. 3 Novak Djokovic and No. 10 David Nalbandian, also were in action later Thursday.

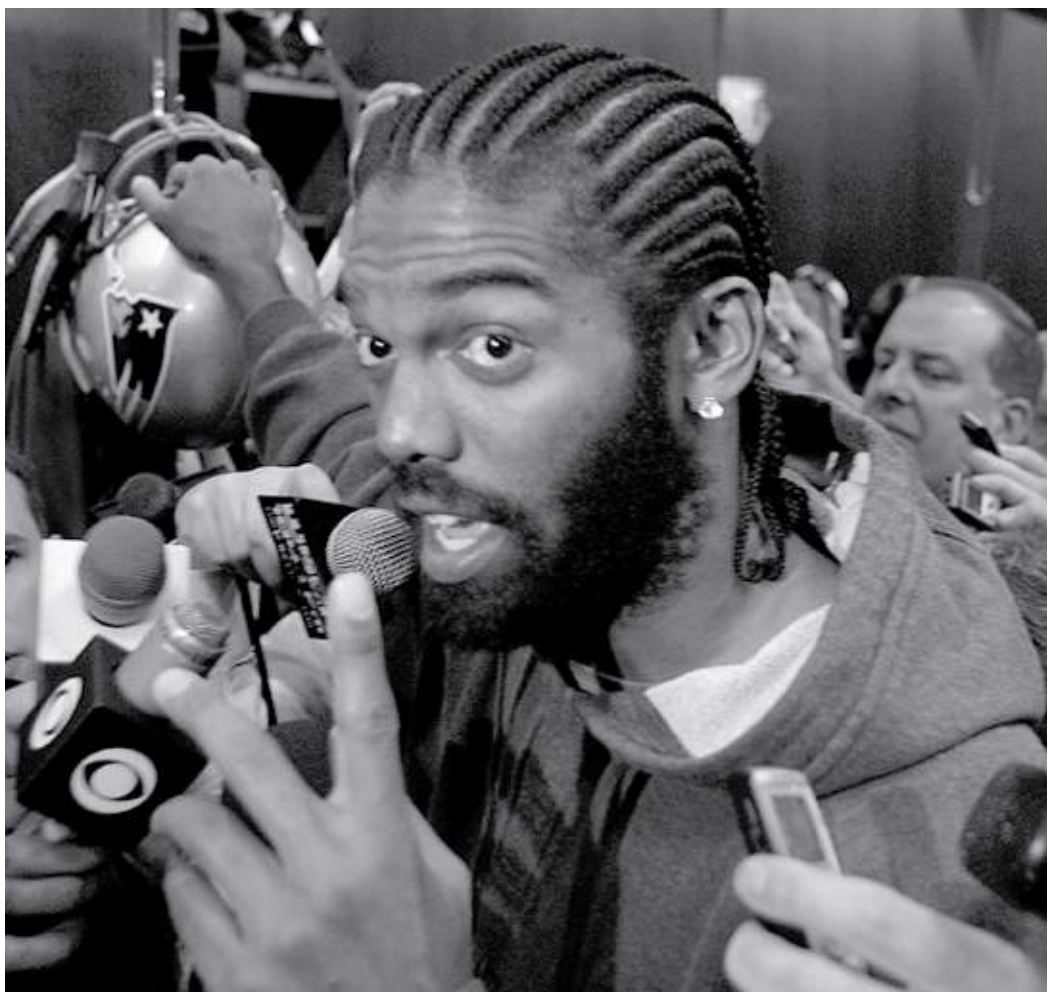
Rafael Nadal, the only man to beat Federer in the last 10 majors, reached the third round with a 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Florent Serra on Wednesday night.

Sixth-seeded Andy Roddick had a 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 win over Michael Berrer and Mardy Fish ousted No. 11 Tommy Robredo 6-1, 6-2, 6-3.

In a second-round match worthy of the second week, fifth-seeded Maria Sharapova had 6-1, 6-3 win over three-time Grand Slam winner Lindsay Davenport, in her first major since giving birth to son, Jagger, last June.

No. 1 Justine Henin extended her winning streak to 30 and advanced along with No. 3 Jelena Jankovic, defending champion Serena Williams, 2006 winner Amelie Mauresmo, No. 11 Elena Dementieva and No. 12 Nicole Vaidisova.

Patriots' Moss denies battery allegation



AP

New England Patriots wide receiver Randy Moss answers reporter's questions concerning allegations that he committed battery on a woman he has know for eleven years during a media availability in front of his locker at the NFL football team's facility in Foxborough, Mass., Wednesday morning, Jan. 16, 2008.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—Randy Moss joined the Patriots this season determined to avoid off-field problems. Now he's in the middle of one, just days before Sunday's AFC championship game.

A temporary restraining order was issued Monday requiring the star wide receiver to stay at least 500 feet from a woman who alleged he committed "battery causing serious injury" to her at her Florida home on Jan. 6.

Moss denied the allegation by Rachelle Washington, which he called "this situation of extortion," and said he was "furious" about it. The restraining order was issued in the Broward County 17th Judicial Circuit of Florida. No criminal charge has been brought.

A hearing on whether to issue a permanent restraining order is scheduled for 3 p.m. Jan. 28, six days before the Super Bowl.

Moss broke his usual midweek silence as he was surrounded by two dozen reporters and 10 videocameras at his locker on Wednesday. He didn't identify the woman but said she has been a friend for 11 years and that she asked for "six figures" for what he said was an accident in which she was hurt.

"I want to make something clear," Moss said. "In my whole entire life of living 30 years, I've never put my hand on one woman, physically or in an angry manner."

David McGill, the attorney for Washington, had no comment, according to his legal assistant, Melissa Miller. A telephone message left by The Associated Press with Moss' attorney, Jim DiPiero, was not immediately returned.

In his previous nine seasons—seven with Minnesota and two with Oakland—Moss was involved in several off-field incidents.

"This is a negative," he said of the latest allegation, "a black cloud hanging over my head, and that's something that I did not want coming into the season. ... Everything I tried to do from getting here early, to make sure I eat the right food, all the way to practicing and playing, I wanted all of that to be A-plus.

"Everything's been positive, so why would I bring something negative on. As much as I care and love the game of football and love my teammates, I would never put myself or them in a situation of something like this."

With the Vikings, he was criticized by quarterback Daunte Culpepper and others for leaving the field with 2 seconds left in a regular-season loss to Washington. He bumped a traffic control officer with his car in 2002, verbally abused corporate sponsors on a team bus in 2001 and squirted an official with a water bottle in 1999.

On draft day last April, the Patriots sent a 2007 fourth-round draft choice to Oakland for Moss, who has avoided off-field problems this season and been hailed by Patriots players as an excellent teammate and leader.

Undefeated New England plays the San Diego Chargers in the AFC championship game in Foxborough on Sunday, thanks in part to Moss, who was named to the All-Pro team. During the season he caught 98 passes for 1,493 yards and 23 touchdowns, breaking Jerry Rice's single-season mark of 22. He had one catch in Saturday night's 31-20 playoff win over Jacksonville, which resorted to double and triple coverage on him.

Washington alleged Moss refused to allow her to seek medical treatment.

"She has her own house. She has her own car," Moss said. "So how am I going to deny someone medical attention when you live by yourself and have your own vehicle?"

He said the allegation will not distract him in Sunday's game against the San Diego Chargers.

"Last Friday, this man wanted to come out with it," Moss said, apparently referring to someone siding with Washington, "just to try to distract the team and distract me.

"There was much more said, a lot of verbal, a lot of cuss words, a lot of things that I should be doing. You better do this or else. ... Well, I thought it was bad because now you're threatening me, so I brought it to coach."

He said Patriots coach Bill Belichick told him to focus on football.

"They're false allegations, something I've been battling for like the last couple of days of threats going public if I didn't pay X amount of dollars," Moss said. "So before people rush quick to judgment, I think you need to find out the facts about, really, what's going on.

"This young lady by no means is hurt. I didn't hurt her."

Two teammates voiced support for Moss.

"I don't know the situation," linebacker Tedy Bruschi said. "He's a teammate of mine so by me saying he's a teammate of mine, it's almost me saying he's a family member."

"I don't think any of that situation is going to be on the field for us on Sunday so it doesn't bother me," running back Kevin Faulk said. "He's our teammate, He's like a brother."

Moss said athletes are targets for false allegations.

"It's very unfair to athletes if a person makes a false claim. You know, there's nothing that we can do," Moss said. "The only thing that we can do is either pay up or sit back and listen to what's being said or what's being written.

"For someone to make a false claim about me, I'm kind of furious. It kind of hurts me deep inside for someone to do something like that because, you know, I've always said time and time again, I'm going to stand up for what's right. If I'm right, I'm right. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong."

Moss faced misdemeanor charges after a 1996 fight with the mother of his daughter, but they were dropped after both agreed to counseling.

He was asked if he thought people would believe his current denial.

"I think the best thing is to check my resume, ask around," Moss said. "I've never hit a woman. I do not hit women."

NFL BRIEFS

Complaint withdrawn against Pacman Jones

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Authorities in Georgia say a woman who accused suspended Tennessee Titans cornerback Adam "Pacman" Jones of hitting her has withdrawn her petition to have him arrested. A clerk in the Warrants Division told The Associated Press that the petition of Wanda S. Jackson had been withdrawn on Wednesday. Neither Jackson nor Jones' attorneys returned calls seeking comment on Wednesday. Jackson, an attorney, said in her filing that she was in the Body Tap strip club's office on Jan. 3 when an angry Jones accused managers of stealing his money and bracelet. Jackson said she was watching the confrontation when Jones "sucker punched" her. Last month, Jones pleaded no contest to a disorderly conduct charge related to a strip club shooting in Las Vegas that left club manager Tommy Urbanski paralyzed. Jones has been arrested six times since being drafted sixth overall in 2005, including two arrests in Georgia in 2006 that the Titans did not learn about until 2007.

Titans fire offensive coordinator Chow

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The Tennessee Titans fired offensive coordinator Norm Chow on Tuesday after a season of struggling to score points and reaching the playoffs for the first time since 2003. Titans coach Jeff Fisher confirmed the dismissal in a short statement. Chow, who had been on staff for three years, did not immediately return a telephone message left by The Associated Press. But Fisher said the day after his Titans (10-6) lost an AFC wild-card game to San Diego 17-6 that improving the offense was his top priority this offseason. They ranked 21st overall in total offense and became the first team with only nine touchdown passes to reach the playoffs in a 16-game season. After a week of evaluating the team, Fisher told Chow he would not be retained as offensive coordinator. "I appreciate all of the hard work and contributions he made to the organization during his time here, but I have decided to go in a different direction and will start the process of finding a new offensive coordinator," Fisher said in the statement.

Dolphins hire Tony Sparano as new head coach

DAVIE, Fla. (AP)—Discussing his new job as Miami Dolphins coach, Tony Sparano sounded like Tony Soprano. "I'm just happy to be part of the family," Sparano said. The family includes his mentor, Bill Parcells, and general manager Jeff Ireland, who are transforming their new team into the Miami Cowboys.

Sparano is the latest transplant from Dallas. He was the Cowboys' assistant head coach before accepting an offer Wednesday to rejoin Parcells and Ireland.

The trio worked together in Dallas when Parcells was head coach in 2003-06.

"I know what the people here are capable of, and I'm excited about that," Sparano said at a news conference.

Parcells sat in a corner of the room, smiling occasionally like a proud papa. He declined to meet with reporters, leaving the talk to his proteges.

"When Bill and I discussed what we were looking for in a head coach, we talked about one of high character," Ireland said. "We wanted someone who understood how to develop young players, one who could instill a culture that's all about winning.

"We think we found that guy. We know we found that guy."

The hiring had been anticipated since Parcells fired Cam Cameron, who went 1-15 in his first year as an NFL head coach. Of the four candidates Miami interviewed, Sparano was the only one with ties to the new regime.

"I've coached for a lot of people and worked for a lot of great coaches," Sparano said. "Coach Parcells has taught me the most and prepared me the most for this job."

The 46-year-old Sparano said he's unconcerned that he might be working in the shadow of his boss.

"If at the end of the day that's the worst thing that happens to me, I'm OK," Sparano said. "I know Coach Parcells is here as a resource for me, and I'm going to use him as much as I can."

Their relationship dates to 2003, when Sparano became the Cowboys' tight ends coach. But he has long respected the work of Parcells, who won NFL titles with the New York Giants in the 1986 and 1990 seasons.

"I grew up a Giant fan," Sparano said. "My father to this day is a Giant fan, OK? I hope he's a Dolphin fan today, but we grew up that way."

The Dolphins can thank the Giants for expediting their hiring of a coach. Sparano became available when the Cowboys lost their playoff game to New York on Sunday.

"It does leave a bitter taste in my mouth," Sparano said. "Anybody who knows me knows I'm about finishing. We didn't finish. That left a bad taste in my mouth. ...

"Obviously it has been a real crazy week for me. But I'm glad it ends this way."

He flew in from Dallas on Tuesday evening and had dinner with a group that included Parcells, Ireland and owner Wayne Huizenga. Sparano arrived at the team complex Wednesday morning accompanied by Ireland. Huizenga soon joined them, and an hour later an agreement was reached.

"I'm prepared," Sparano said. "I'm confident in myself."

Ireland first interviewed Sparano in Dallas on Jan. 5. Others interviewed by the Dolphins were Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier, former Baltimore Ravens defensive coordinator Rex Ryan and Tennessee Titans defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz.

Sparano also was a candidate for head jobs with the Ravens and Atlanta Falcons, but he had been widely expected to join the Dolphins.

Astros owner: No regrets on Miguel Tejada trade

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)— Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane was surprised when Miguel Tejada was mentioned in the Mitchell Report but has no regrets about acquiring the star shortstop.

The chairman and ranking minority member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee asked the Justice Department to investigate whether Tejada, the 2002 AL MVP, made false statements to federal authorities.

"You can't look back," McLane said Wednesday during a break at the major league owners' meetings. "You have to move forward."

McLane said Astros general manager Ed Wade had spoken briefly to Tejada's agent but has not talked to the player, whose brother died Tuesday in a motorcycle accident in the Dominican Republic.

"We're going to wait until we know more facts and see really what the issues are and what needs to be done," McLane said.

Tejada, who won his MVP award with the Oakland Athletics, was acquired from Baltimore on Dec. 12, one day before the Mitchell Report was released. The report said former Oakland teammate Adam Piatt claimed that he gave steroids to Tejada in 2003, and the report includes checks for $3,100 and $3,200 purportedly written from Tejada to Piatt.

McLane said he was caught off-guard when Tejada was mentioned in the report and that he asked commissioner Bud Selig on Wednesday if he knew in advance that Tejada would be in the report.

"We've read reports on hundreds of players over the last two years, and you didn't know whether he had denied them," McLane said. "But you had no idea he was going to be in the Mitchell Report. Then this just came out of the blue. I was asking the commissioner a little while ago, I said, `Did y'all know that was going to happen?' and he said, 'We were startled too.' They had no knowledge."

McLane said the Astros don't have a backup plan at shortstop if Tejada can't play this season.

"You don't know whether that was just some big scene and will fade away, or is it a real issue," McLane said. "We just need to determine what the committee and Congress is going to do, and what his side of the story is."

Selig hopes to decide discipline soon

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)— Baseball commissioner Bud Selig hopes to complete his review of players and executives mentioned in the Mitchell Report by the start of spring training in mid-February.

One day after testifying before Congress, Selig spoke to owners at the start of a two-day meeting. He did not say whether he would discipline San Francisco Giants officials for failing to report concerns about Barry Bonds' personal trainer, Greg Anderson.

"All he did was reiterate that he needs to review the individual players and the clubs and is going to try to do that as expeditiously as possible, and before spring training if at all possible," said Bob DuPuy, baseball's chief operating officer.

Rob Manfred, MLB's executive vice president for labor relations briefed owners on the recommendations in the Mitchell Report that have already been adopted unilaterally by management.

"I think everybody's getting tired of dealing with this stuff and having to debate it and so on and so forth," Los Angeles Dodgers owner Frank McCourt said. "The fans deserve a clean game, and let's get there and let's look forward instead of just dwelling on the past."

The owners met as the World Anti-Doping Agency and Major League Baseball exchanged barbs over whether the sport is resisting independent drug testing.

"There was a discussion, as you would expect, of the Mitchell Report and of the commissioner's stellar performance yesterday before Congress and the reaction of Congress, (and) where we are with our discussions with the union," DuPuy said.

WADA's new president severely criticized baseball on Wednesday, saying the sport was resisting the recommendation by former Senate majority leader George Mitchell to transfer drug testing to an independent body.

New WADA boss John Fahey blistered the sport for loopholes in its drug-testing program and heightened tension between MLB and the drug body.

"Professional baseball's response to Sen. Mitchell's report is baffling," Fahey said in a statement. "To suggest that it might continue to keep its anti-doping testing program in-house ... is demeaning to Sen. Mitchell and the congressional committees who view doping as a serious threat to public health."

Baseball fired right back with its own statement.

"These continuing, unprovoked, inaccurate publicity stunts by WADA have created an unwillingness to become more involved with WADA and its affiliates," Manfred said. "We were hopeful that false public statements by WADA would end with its recent change in leadership, and we are deeply disappointed that Mr. Fahey is showing the same counterproductive tendencies as his predecessor."

Since its inception in 2002, MLB's drug program has been run by a joint management-player committee. After prodding from Congress, a jointly picked independent administrator was added for the 2006 season but the administrator can be removed at any time by either party.

"Senator Mitchell said that he believed that a drug-testing program, to be effective, had to be operated independently," DuPuy said. "And he made some suggestions with regard to our current program, and how current program, which we believe is independent, could be made even more independent.

"That's the track we are headed down at this point in time, although that obviously has to be negotiated with the union," DuPuy said. "We can't do that unilaterally."

Owners will back Selig's decisions.

"There are some things that you've got to yank it out of the closet and get it out, but there's also a situation where you draw some lines and move forward, and I think that's where we are," Los Angeles Angels owner Arte Moreno said.

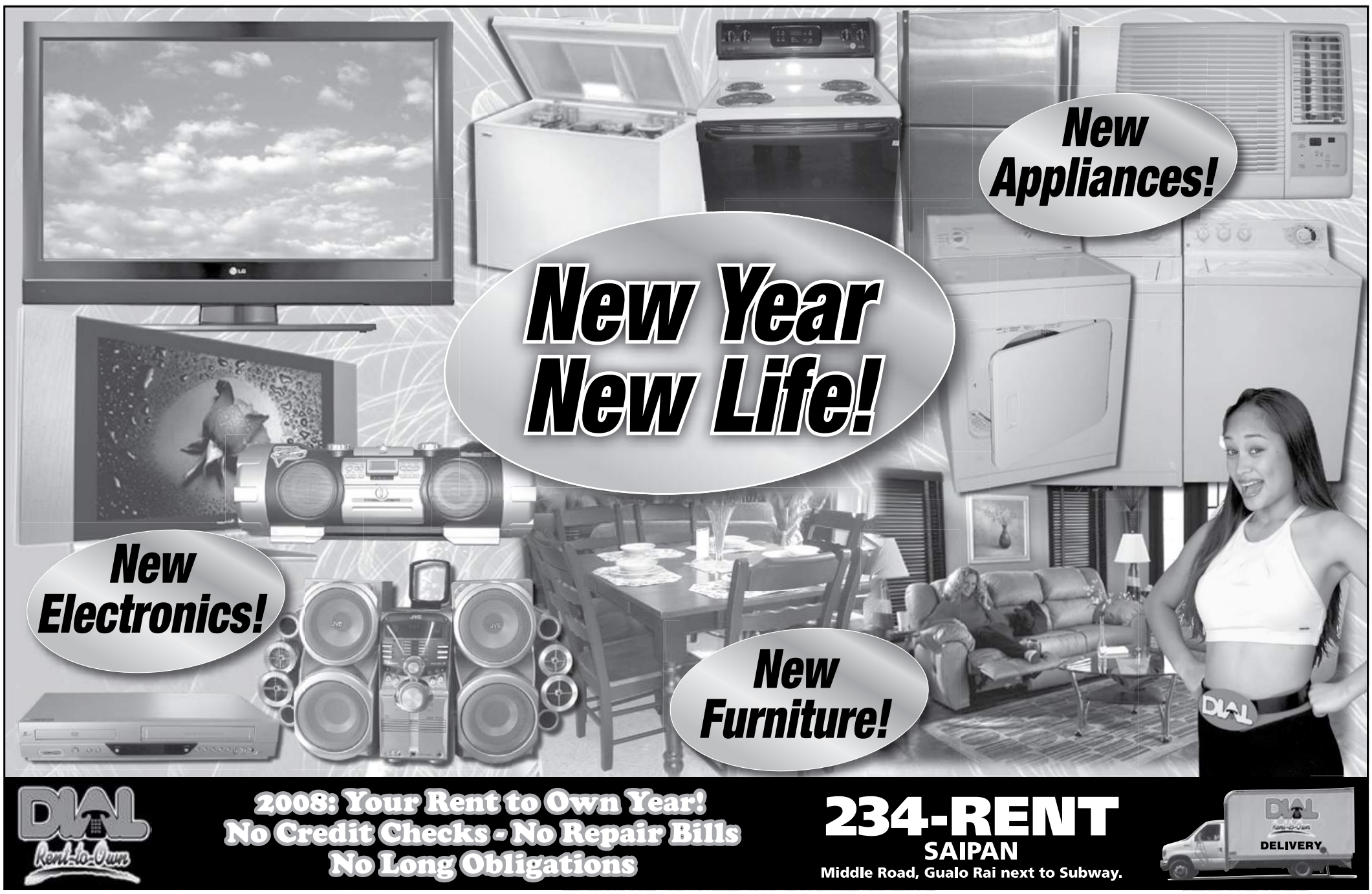
Also Wednesday, DuPuy said baseball officials will meet in the next few days with county and city authorities in South Florida about a proposed ballpark for the Florida Marlins.

"There remain obstacles to completing the transaction," DuPuy said. "But as I explained to the executive council, I believe there is a willingness by all parties to get the deal done, and all parties are working very hard to get the deal done."

Miami-Dade County commissioners last month approved a public works project that includes a new 37,000-seat retractable-roof stadium. The ballpark would be built on the site of the Orange Bowl. The agreement also includes a performing arts center, port tunnel project and soccer stadium.

The project calls for a 37,000-seat retractable-roof stadium. According to a revised county proposal, the stadium would be funded, in part, by hotel bed tax dollars and a large, upfront contribution from the Marlins.

DuPuy said there would be "modest rules changes" announced when the meetings conclude on Thursday, but he said instant replay was not discussed.



Inclement weather postpones Wahoo Jackpot Derby

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Mother Nature has postponed tomorrow's scheduled 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby as forecasts this Saturday call for northeast winds of up to 15-20 knots generating swells from five to seven feet.

The Saipan Fisherman's Association postponed the one-day fishing extravaganza due to expected inclement weather during a meeting last Tuesday.

"Based on the forecast for the derby this Saturday, we will be having the same conditions or worse as they are today (Thursday). Northeast wind 15 to 20 knots with wind waves from five to seven feet, east swell up to six feet and north swell at four to five feet. The forecast has 15mph winds on tap with gusts up to 20mph and five to seven feet swells," according to a statement from the Marianas Visitors Authority.

MVA said the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby will be rescheduled to a different date and told participants to await for future announcements.

SFA was set to stage the 2008 edition of the event tomorrow, Jan. 19, in the waters of the Marianas.

Ten boats and many more fisherman heeded John D. Guerrero's call and took to the water in December 2006 in search of a winner as participants of the inaugural Wahoo Jackpot Derby.

The top prize of the inaugural competition went to captain John Tenorio and angler Jack Diaz of the *Ana Maria* who reeled in the catch of the day when they hoisted their 22.55-lbs. wahoo out of the water, and their efforts on the sea brought them a hefty $600 cash prize.

The crew of the *Ana Maria* wasn't the only group of gaffers to take home a share of the prize money, as captain Mark Hanson, Dave Banes, and Narong the Wahoo Wrangler took home $400 for weighing in the most pieces of pisces when they brought the Sea Amigo to the docks with three fish on board.

For more information about the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby, contact MVA's Frank Tudela at 664-3200/01 or e-mail at ftudela@mymarianas.com.

Badminton group to lay out plans for '08

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas Badminton Federation will lay out its plans for 2008 as they hold a leadership training and committee planning tomorrow, Jan. 19, at the Sun Palace Hotel in Susupe.

The whole day session, from 9am to 5pm, aims to finalize the NMBF's projects for the whole year including the aggressive promotion of badminton in various schools.

Newly elected president Marconi Calindas is requiring all officers and their representatives to attend morning and afternoon sessions, while committee members are only requested to join the afternoon meeting.

Five committees were also formed that would help the current officers make sure the plans would be implemented. The committees are membership, finance, auditing, tournament and logistics, and training development.

Calindas is requesting all members who wanted to participate and volunteer to choose the committee that they would join in. Each committee is composed of a chair, an assistant, and a secretary that will be elected or selected within their group.

Vice president Edwin Montoya retains his post, while other elected officers are Hapi Gabriel, secretary; Malou Mendoza, treasurer; and Cristy Villaflor, auditor.

Shirley Kim, Gigi Zapanta, and Lito Mendoza remain members of the board of directors with Guadalupe Sabino and Marlene Peraja joining them.

For more information about tomorrow's leadership training and future activities of NMBF, call Gabriel at 287-4274 or email NMBF@yahoogroups.com.

SONICS

From Page 44

ter end of the matchup as he had the deeper bench and had the luxury of putting fresher legs to replace his starters.

With Manuel Ajoste having an off night, Lerio Pagarao and Jon Lim carried the scoring load for the Sonics with Jason Bahillo hitting timely baskets, mostly on second chance points, to help his team keep the game close.

The usually reliable Ajoste was held to a season-low four points but he and Mike Eclevia, who also had four markers, alternated at point guard to put order in the Sonics' offense.

Pagarao scored a game-high 24 points with tireless center Lim supporting him with 21 markers, while Bahillo barreled his way for 17 points.

Jericho Cruz remained the Junior Nationals main offensive weapon, ending up with 23 points, while Marvin Rabauliman backed him up with 16 more.

Bull-strong Bill Babauta, wily guard Keoni Chariton, and back-up guard Allan Moses finished with 13 points each.

In the first game, Ed Diaz scored 28 points to lead the Suns to a 98-83 decision over the hard-fighting Rebels.

Diaz then joined forces with Elmer Esdrelon and Steve Rasa in the fourth quarter to foil the Rebels' comeback bid. Enjoying an 84-72 lead with 6:31 left in the final canto, the Suns twice saw their double-digit advantage vanish as Luis Iguel and Joey Dela Cruz consistently buried their outside jumpers to keep their team in the game.

After the Rebels cut the lead to eight with more than four minutes left in the clock, Diaz, Esdrelon, and Rasa went to work to lead the Suns to the next round of the playoffs.

Diaz and Esdrelon combined for 55 points, while Rasa had 13 markers, Edsel Mendoza contributed 15 more.

Iguel and Dela Cruz combined for 51 points, while Ivan Devero tallied 11 markers for the Rebels.

First Game

Saipan Stevedore Suns 98 – Diaz 28, Esdrelon 27, Mendoza 15, Rasa 13, Joyner 6, Palacios 5, Baculud 2, John 2.

Runnin' Rebels 83 – Iguel 26, Dela Cruz 25, Devero 11, Mendoza 6, Dillay 4, Omar 3, Tumaquip 3, Magofna 2, Oliatiman 2, Hocog 1.

Scoring by quarters: 33-23, 54-44, 74-69, 98-83.

Second Game

Southern Sonics 88 – L. Pagarao 24, Lim 21 Bahillo 17, Duenas 8, Mendiola 5, M. Ajoste 4, Eclevia 4, J. Pagarao 3, Nedlic 2.

CNMI Junior Nationals 86 – Cruz 23, Rabauliman 16, Babauta 13, Chariton 13, Moses 13, Blas 2, Jung 2, Norita2, Tenorio 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-16, 42-41, 66-66, 88-86.

JAMIE

From Page 44

the Lanes.

Jamie said advancing into the stepladder finals was somewhat a challenge and surprise for her since she is expected to go up against two bowlers who are knocking down an average score like the one's in the King of the Lanes.

"I thought I was lucky to even reach the roll-offs. Because of this, I expected to lose against Zack Cruz," said Jamie, who added that Marion McKenzie gave her more pressure since her co-bowler in the youth league is breathing down her neck.

McKenzie was leading Jamie in the early stages of the six-game series but faltered midway with the latter to capitalizing on her closest pursuer's mistakes for a total of 952-923 win to place fourth and advanced in the stepladder finals.

Jamie was then pitted against the top-seeded Cruz, who finished with 1,112 total pinfalls. But luck sided with her as Cruz suffered blisters on his thumb which she exploited to ran away with a 176-166 decision to arrange a finals showdown with the second ranked and four-time monthly winner Jeremy Williams. "This advantage [Cruz's blisters] is probably the reason why I won."

She had mixed emotions in her finals match against Williams but her father Roger calmed her down, telling her to relax and take her time in making her shots. "My dad told me to play as if it was just practice. This helped me a lot throughout the game since I didn't take any misses seriously."

And that paid off as the Marianas Baptist Academy senior hit paydirt and beat Williams, 186-163, to crown herself the 2007 Princess of the Lanes. She said winning the title against the boys and in front of her family was a happy and memorable moment of her young bowling career.

"Being the only girl in the finals was quite different but I decided to ignore it and just play. Beating Jeremy was a happy moment since he is known to have the same averages as men competing in the King of the Lanes and it was even better that my family was there."

Jamie, whose fancies any subject related to math and numbers, considers the yearlong Prince/Princess of the Lanes as one of her greatest challenges in 2007. "It has always been a challenge for me since I am competing with other youth bowlers with greater ability."

She started bowling when she was six years old after seeing parents Roger and Celia and older sister Jerrie play. "[My family] were all my influences. Sarah Yap was my first professional coach and she greatly [helped me] improved my game."

The Princess of the Lanes crown is Jamie's first major win and she also played against other youth bowlers from Guam in a friendship tournament. She hopes to someday don the CNMI colors in an off-island tournament.

TINIAN

From Page 44

"It was good start for gathering together all the good players in Micronesia under one roof. Everyone got the opportunity to know each other, to play against each other, and become one big ping-pong playing family," he said.

Cheng said the highlight of the 2007 Micro Cup was when Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association president Steven Lim was recognized and given a gold medal during the event from all of the players "for his selflessness and untiring service to ping-pong in the CNMI."

Cheng said for 2008, the Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club will continue to host the Tinian leg of the Table Tennis Goodwill Tournament as well as take part in the Saipan leg of the twice-a-year competition.

He added that the Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club currently has six players with former Shaanxi Provincial Table Tennis Team coach Zheng "Mark" Ma serving as it head coach. Tinian Dynasty managing director Alfred Yue is the president of the club.

Cheng said the six players practice two to four times a week depending on the hotel's job schedule, two to three hours a day.

He said, hands down, Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club's best player is Ma with Yue and Robin Lu improving leaps and bounds. Other members of the club are Luke Lu and Liang Wei Bin.

MATTA and Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club split last year's Table Tennis Goodwill Tournament with Tinian winning the Tinian leg and MATTA likewise protecting home turf by winning the Saipan leg of the series.

SAIPAN

From Page 44

rial Park.

The course for the full marathon begins and ends at Micro Beach. Runners will go north towards Middle Road where they would go through the villages of Puerto Rico, Tanapag, and San Roque. They will then turn around in Marpi, north of Marianas Resort and Spa and return to Beach Road to connect with the half marathon racecourse.

An hour after the challengers of the full marathon course get going, participants in the half marathon would begin their journey from Micro Beach and head toward south along Beach Road through the villages of Garapan, San Jose, Susupe, Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio.

The full marathon runners will then connect with the half marathon participants at Beach Road. They will then turn around at the main entrance of the Pacific Islands Club and head back at the same route and finish at Micro Beach.

The 10K course also begins at Micro Beach where runners head toward south along Beach Road where they would pass by Garapan and San Jose and turn around across from the First Hawaiian Bank in San Jose where they would return to Micro Beach.

An orientation will take place today at 4pm at the American Memorial Park Amphitheater where organizers will accept final registration. A spaghetti dinner follows at 5pm.

Organizers have prepared 10 aid stations for the full marathon, while seven and five are allotted for the half marathon and the 10K run. The awards banquet for the three racing events will be held at 12noon at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

The entrance fee for the full marathon is $45, while $35 will be collected for the half marathon and 10K participants. No entries will be accepted on race day.

The race is held in cooperation with Marianas Visitors Authority, Northern Mariana Athletics, Northwest Airlines, Excite.com, and Oakley.

For more information, call Ed Diaz at 664-3210 or email ediaz@mymarianas.com.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	31	6	.838	_
Toronto	21	18	.538	11
New Jersey	18	20	.474	13 1/2
Philadelphia	15	24	.385	17
New York	12	26	.316	19 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	24	17	.585	_
Washington	20	17	.541	2
Atlanta	17	18	.486	4
Charlotte	15	23	.395	7 1/2
Miami	8	29	.216	14

Central Division

Detroit	29	10	.744	_
Cleveland	20	18	.526	8 1/2
Indiana	18	22	.450	11 1/2
Milwaukee	16	23	.410	13
Chicago	15	22	.405	13

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	11	.694	_
Dallas	26	12	.684	_
New Orleans	26	12	.684	_
Houston	20	19	.513	6 1/2
Memphis	10	28	.263	16

Northwest Division

Portland	23	15	.605	_
Denver	22	15	.595	1/2
Utah	22	17	.564	1 1/2
Seattle	9	29	.237	14
Minnesota	5	32	.135	17 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	26	11	.703	_
Phoenix	26	12	.684	1/2
Golden State	23	17	.575	4 1/2
Sacramento	15	22	.405	11
L.A. Clippers	11	23	.324	13 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Chicago 126, Miami 96
Toronto 116, Sacramento 91
Indiana 125, Golden State 117
Charlotte 99, Orlando 93
Boston 100, Portland 90
New York 111, New Jersey 105
Milwaukee 87, Atlanta 80
New Orleans 123, Seattle 92

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

15 swimmers retrace route of Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Fifteen intrepid swimmers took part in last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux from Pau Pau Beach to Managaha Island.

True to the event's name, Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael Stewart spotted 16 eagle rays.

There were other wonderful ocean life sightings as well. Harumi Sugihashi, for one, reportedly saw a small shark, while Stewart and fellow kayaker Laila Qudsi spotted a large sea turtle while paddling kayaks back from the little island to the big island.

The 7-kilometer aquatic journey, which retraced the path 24 other swimmers took last Dec. 15, was topped by 14-year-old Grace Christian Academy student Michael Moran.

Moran, the son of *Saipan Tribune*'s Miko and Commonwealth Health Center's Babes Moran, finished the swim in just over two hours.

The event was dubbed Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim because of the preponderance of eagle rays in the route of the swim, which has resulted in the area being called Eagle Ray City by locals and tourists alike.

DAN KIMBALL
The 15 swimmers that completed last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux pose for a picture at Managaha Island.

Junior Pamaran is relieved as he nears shore.

DAN KIMBALL

DAN KIMBALL
Mamiko Oshima admires the view of Saipan from Managaha Island as she rests to let her accomplishment sink in.

The 15 intrepid swimmers and escorting kayakers launch from Pau Pau Beach en route to Managaha Island in last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux.

DAN KIMBALL

Support kayaks and their trusty pilots head for home after helping out in last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux.

DAN KIMBALL

Monica Yamaguchi lets out a roar as she reaches the Managaha Island shore.

DAN KIMBALL

Laila Qudsi guides home a swimmer.

DAN KIMBALL

Maimi Shimizu finishes the 7-kilometer swim with a smile.

DAN KIMBALL

DAN KIMBALL
Grace Kimball and kayaker Mark Staal are almost to Managaha Island.

DAN KIMBALL
Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael gets a hug from a relieved Monica Yamaguchi.

DAN KIMBALL
Lester Lapuz finishes strong in last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux.

15 swimmers retrace route of Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim

Fifteen intrepid swimmers took part in last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux from Pau Pau Beach to Managaha Island.

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Sonics outlast Junior Nationals

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Southern Sonics continued its dominance over CNMI Junior Nationals Wednesday night after escaping with an 88-86 win in the playoff round of the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Island-wide Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Saipan Stevedore Suns foiled the repeated comeback attempts of Runnin' Rebels in cruising to a 98-83 win in the second game to join the Sonics in the winner's bracket of the double-elimination playoff round.

The win was the Sonics' fourth in the six games they played against the Junior Nationals since the summer of last year. One of the Sonics' losses to the Junior Nationals was in the Rotary youth cage league finals last month.

It was also a revenge of sorts for the Sonics after they lost to the Junior Nationals, 88-95, last Oct. 5 during the elimination round. The Southern crew of coach Jesse Tudela went on to win five straight games after that loss including a morale-boosting 72-68 victory over powerhouse Suns on Oct. 17.

The Sonics will now face D-1 Ulloa's, which scored a 104-93 upset win over the top-ranked Ol'Aces last Monday, on Jan. 21 at 7pm, while the Suns take on Rock Steady in the 8:30pm second game.

The Junior Nationals and Rebels dropped to the losers' bracket along with Ol'Aces and Bombers. One more loss would eliminate them in the playoffs.

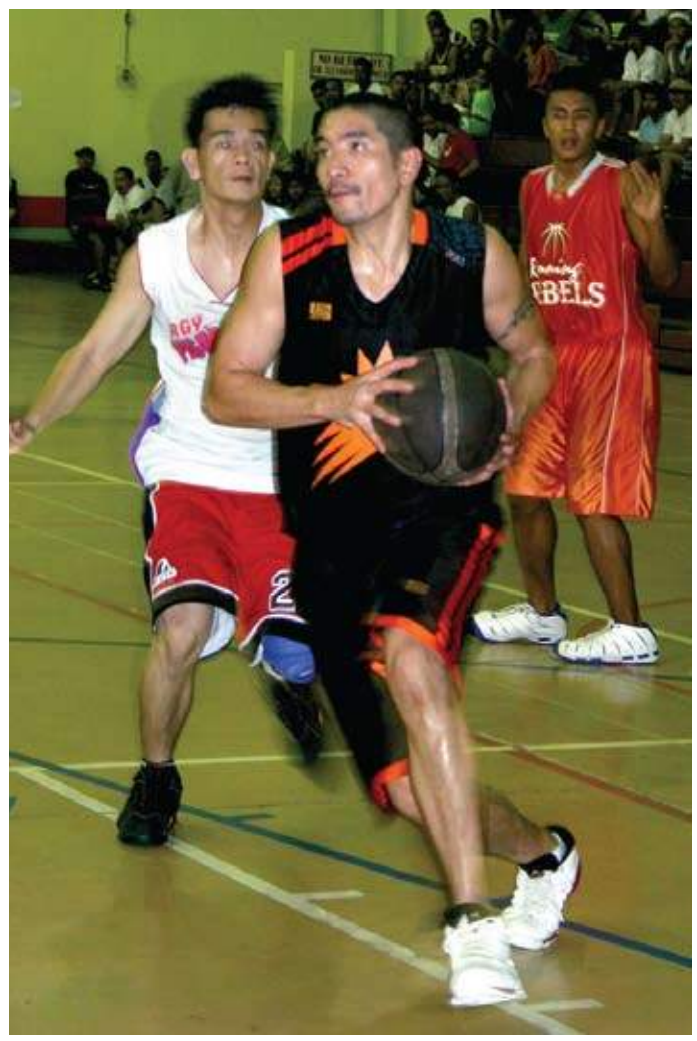
The undermanned Ol'Aces battle the Junior Nationals at 7pm tonight, while the Rebels clash with the Bombers at 8:30pm.

The Sonics-Junior Nationals match was reminiscent of their past games with both teams opting to run or take their points inside the paint. Both teams also played aggressively and at times forced their shots, resulting in the score still tied at 2-2 with almost five minutes gone in the first quarter.

Sonics coach Tudela and Junior Nationals mentor Ed Manlili where also very much in the game, continuously shuffling their men looking for the right combination.

Tudela, however, got the bet-

See SONICS on Page 42



JON PEREZ

Jericho Cruz of the CNMI Junior Nationals tries to block the shot attempt of Southern Sonics' Pete Mendiola in their Wednesday playoff game in the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Island-wide Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Right, Saipan Stevedore Suns' Edsel Mendoza, right, slips past the defense of Joelan Mendoza of the Runnin' Rebels in their Wednesday playoff game in the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Island-wide Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Jamie hopes to follow sister's footsteps

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Newly crowned Princess of the Lanes winner Jamie Vales hopes to follow in the footsteps of older sister Jerrie.

Jerrie, who is a former CNMI National Bowling Team member and a consistent fixture in women's bowling events on Saipan, is currently in her freshman year at the University of Guam where she is taking nursing.

Though she believes she has bigger shoes to fill, the younger Vales said she will take it slowly. "Following my sister's footsteps is always a challenge. Hopefully I will be as successful as her in the sport and win more titles in the future."

The 16-year-old Jamie, who will turn 17 on March 17, began her quest of accomplishing her sister's past triumphs by emerging on top of a boys-dominated Prince/Princess of

See JAMIE on Page 42

JON PEREZ

Jamie Vales, second left, joins her family for a group photo after receiving her Princess of the Lanes award in last Sunday's award ceremony at Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V. Others in photo are, from left, Vales' father Roger, sister Jerrie, and mother, Celia.

Tinian ping-pong looks forward to better 2008

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club is aiming for a bigger and better 2008 after another successful year in terms of player development in 2007.

The club's spokesperson Charlie Cheng said in an email to the *Saipan Tribune* that, "the year 2007 was another good year after 2006, because everyone was able to post improvements not only on their skill level, but also on their tactics and in terms of tournament experience."

And speaking of tournaments, Cheng said Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club's biggest achievement in 2007 was the successful hosting of the Inaugural Micro Cup at Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

See TINIAN on Page 42

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tinian Dynasty Table Tennis Club members Alfred Yue, fifth from left, and Liang Wei Bin, second from left pose with their counterparts from the Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association during last year's awards banquet of the Tinian leg of the Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Saipan Marathon organizers caution motorists

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Organizers of the 3rd Annual Saipan Marathon, 26th Half Marathon, and 22nd 10-kilometer run are requesting motorists to observe caution tomorrow when they drive along the route of the three racing events.

Foot traffic will be very visible along Micro Beach Road going to Middle Road up to Marpi for the full marathon and Beach Road from Garapan to San Antonio for the half marathon and from Garapan to San Jose for the 10K run.

The full marathon starts at 4:30am, while runners in the half and 10K run will begin their race at 5:45am. The start and finish line will be at Micro Beach at the American Memo-

See SAIPAN on Page 42